

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO LIBRARIES

3 1761 00260496 5



# *Feodor Vladimir Larrovitch*

---

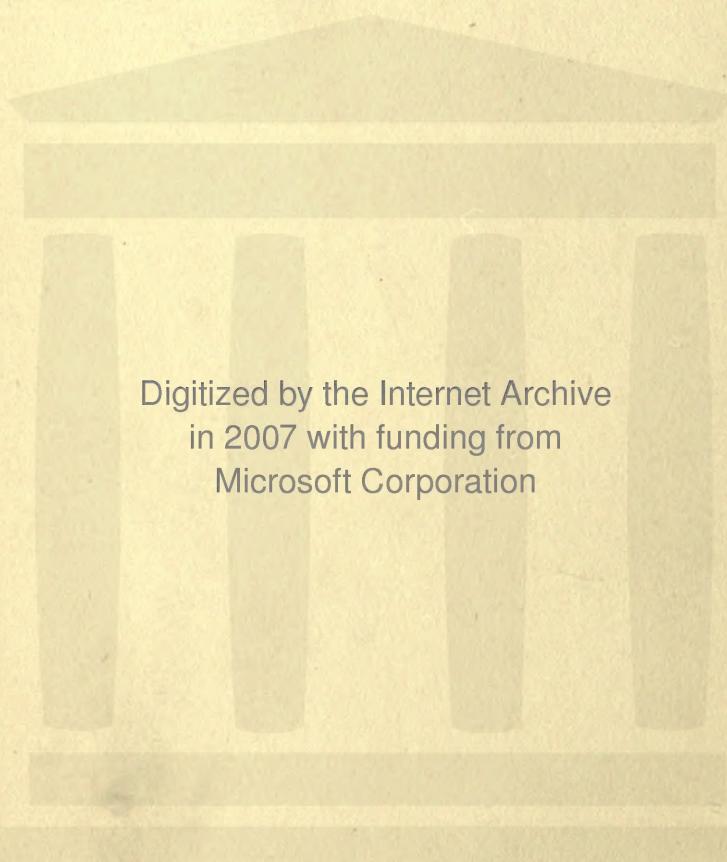
AN APPRECIATION OF HIS LIFE & WORKS

---

PN  
171  
F7J6

9/00





Digitized by the Internet Archive  
in 2007 with funding from  
Microsoft Corporation

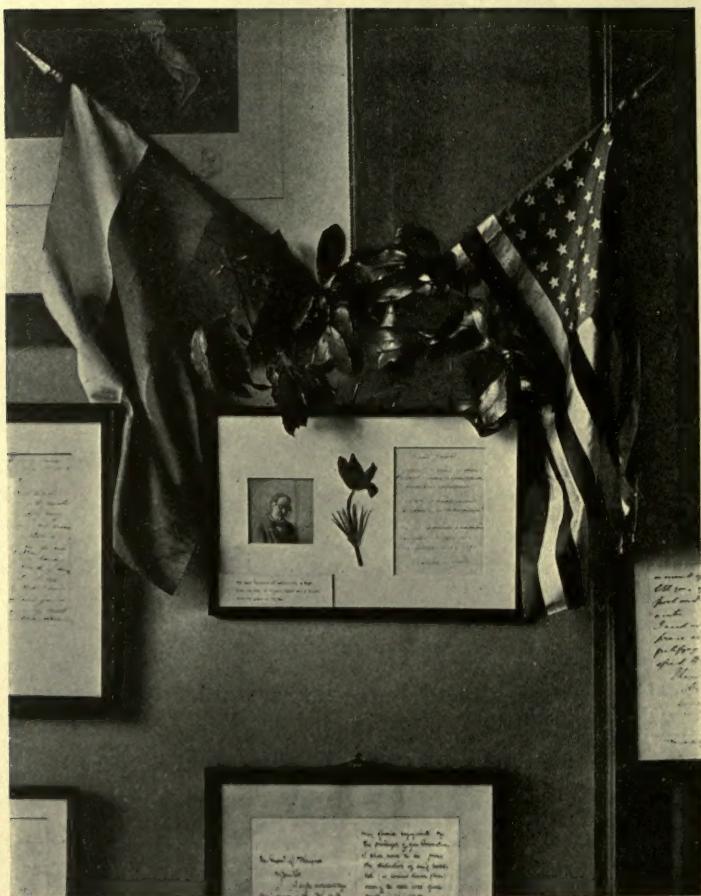












*A portrait of Larrovitch, a pressed flower from his grave at Yalta, and a page of the Ms. of "Crasny Baba," framed and on the walls of the Authors Club*



---

*Feodor Vladimir Larrovitch*

AN APPRECIATION OF HIS LIFE AND WORKS

EDITED BY

WILLIAM GEORGE JORDAN AND

RICHARDSON WRIGHT



496936

---

9. 9. 49

*The Authors Club*

NEW YORK

1918

*Copyright, 1918, by The Authors Club*

PN  
171  
F7J6

---

DEDICATED

TO THE QUICKLY KINDLED AND LASTING SYMPATHY

BETWEEN THE GREAT PEOPLES OF

*America and Russia*



---

## *Contents*

Preface

*Larrovitch*

CLINTON SCOLLARD, A. B.

A Prolegomenon to *Larrovitch*

FRANKLIN H. GIDDINGS, A. B., PH. D., LL. D.

The Personal Side of *Larrovitch*

WILLIAM GEORGE JORDAN

*Larrovitch's* Place in Literature

M'CREADY SYKES, A. B.

Some Translations from *Larrovitch*

RICHARDSON WRIGHT

Three Incidental Poems by *Larrovitch*

GEORGE S. HELLMAN, A. B.

Five *Larrovitch* Letters

THOMAS WALSH, PH. D., LITT. D.

The True and the False About *Larrovitch*

RICHARDSON WRIGHT

Talks with *Larrovitch*

TITUS MUNSON COAN, A. M., M. D.

## *Contents*

Toward a *Larrovitch* Foundation

JAMES HOWARD BRIDGE

Bibliography of *Larrovitch*

ARTHUR COLTON, A. B., PH. D.

Bibliographical Notes

ARTHUR COLTON, A. B., PH. D.

References

GUSTAVE SIMONSON, A. M., M. D.

---

## *Illustrations*

Authors Club *Larrovitch* Memento

The Mother and Father of *Larrovitch*

Ms. from "Crasny Baba"

*Larrovitch* as a Young Man

Invitation to *Larrovitch* Centenary Celebration

Program of *Larrovitch* Centenary Celebration

Room in which *Larrovitch* Died

The Tomb of *Larrovitch* at Yalta

Relics of *Larrovitch*



---

*Preface*



THE purpose of assembling between covers these commentaries on the life and work of Feodor Vladimir Larrovitch was to preserve in permanent form the first American tribute to that finely discerning interpreter of Russian life and ideals.

Between America and Russia there has been a great gulf fixed for many years. Neither America nor Russia has striven very hard—despite several historic manifestations of interest—to foster an abiding friendship. Both nations have suffered from geographic separation. Both have felt acutely the intervention of pernicious influences. There has really been only a meager showing of that sympathy and sentiment which, in other instances, has bred a CAMARADERIE vital, advantageous and enduring.

What was true of our diplomatic relations has also been true of our mutual literary interests. American writers are read in Russia and Russian writers in America, but in neither case are they totally typical of either people. Current public demand has much to do with this. Jack London, for example, is a favorite with the Russian reading public, and in America Artsibasheff has enjoyed a certain measure of popularity. Yet who would say either entirely represented his respective country?

Again, the popularity of a foreign author may be due to the fact that he is "discovered" by some well-known critic, and on the recommendation of that critic translations of his works are devoured by an unreflecting public.

These methods of transplanting a foreign author to a strange soil are, indeed, unfair both to author and reader. They are even more unfair to the great mass of the "undiscovered" who enjoy popularity at home but are without honor abroad. In creating amity between peoples it is necessary to preserve more than a balance of trade; we must establish and maintain a balance of the arts. The path to peace is a road along which all manner of folk can walk

## *Feodor Vladimir Larrovitch*

*and exchange ideas of art, letters and music. These are the abiding expressions of a people.*

*Our separation from Russia has been due mainly to a blind prejudice which even the overthrow of Tsardom cannot entirely dispel. True, we attend the Russian ballet, and have learned that the bear which walked like a man was actually a man who danced like a satyr. In the chaotic tones of Tschaikowsky, Scherabin and Rimsky-Korsakoff, we have found widened casements that look on Heaven. In the pages of Turgeniev, Tolstoi, Gorky, Dostoievsky, and Tchekoff, we read phases of the Russian soul that open to us magnificent vistas of understanding. But even these are not enough. Our art and letters have trodden different paths. If ever they can hope to converge in the broad road of understanding, it must be through a complete acquaintance. We cannot depend for our appreciation of Russian authors upon the chance recommendation of an enthusiastic critic or the shrewd discrimination of a clever publisher who gives the people what he thinks they want. In short, America has still to discover literary Russia. Before we can know the great Russian people we must know something, at least, of all the influences that have come to bear on them through the printed page.*

*In the interests of establishing a literary balance, an amity of the pen between the great peoples of America and Russia, the Authors Club arranged for a celebration of the centenary of Larrovitch's birth. This was held on the evening of April 26, 1917, in the Club Rooms. It was one of the largest gatherings of the year, an indication of the respect felt to be due the great Russian. The contributions which have been gathered together in this volume were read on that occasion. Lantern slides of places intimately associated with Larrovitch were shown and there was ex-*

## *Preface*

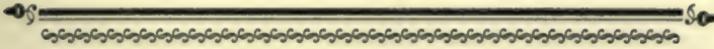
*hibited a collection of Larrovitch relics loaned by M. Lenin of Moscow. A portrait of Larrovitch together with a page from the Ms. of "Crasny Baba," and a pressed flower from the author's grave at Yalta, were presented by a member of the Club and have been given permanent place on our walls.*

WILLIAM GEORGE JORDAN

RICHARDSON WRIGHT

*For the Authors Club.*





# *Larrovitch*

CLINTON SCOLLARD

..... yes, even I have been guilty of verse.  
But who has not? Verse is the natural mode of expression for exalted moments. Its rhythm is an echo of the rhythm of higher things.

*From a letter to S. G. Bonstin*



WHAT I shall say of Larrovitch shall be  
As though one spoke of twilight in the spring,  
Of vernal beauty come to blossoming  
Too soon, to fade and be but memory—  
The memory of a something to which we  
In our exalted moments fain would cling,  
Frail and ephemeral as the white moth's wing,  
Or as the prismy spindrift of the sea.

Let us forget the chill Siberian snows,  
The stark Caucasian heights let us forget;  
These girdled and oppressed him, and his woes  
Wake in our hearts a passionate regret;  
So be there strewn above his long repose  
Sweet sprays of the Crimean violet!

*Clinton Scollard*



---

A PROLEGOMENON TO

*Larrovitch*

•§FRANKLIN H. GIDDINGS

SAY this of me: That I never robbed the poor; that I never fled from foe; that I never failed to protect the young and weak; that I have loved beautiful women and good things to eat and drink; that I have bowed me in the presence of great forest trees and stood uncovered beneath the stars. What does it matter that my name is writ in blood across three provinces? Men shall remember Ivan Soronko who did evil only that he might do good.

*From "IVAN SORONKO."*



## FELLOW MEMBERS OF THE AUTHORS CLUB:

WE are assembled to celebrate the one hundredth birthday of an author. We do not do it often. To the philosophers of the cosmic relations, as to the Eternal Mind, a thousand years may be as one day and one day as a thousand years, but authors in general cannot be so free with time, before or after death. Indeed, it is unusual when, after a rounded century, an author is remembered by authors; and it is extraordinary, as all will agree, when one is so remembered after having been forgotten.

Larrovitch, whom we honor, enjoys the distinction of having been brought to life. With Shakespeare and Napoleon he is of the immortals whose existence has been questioned. For more than fifty years his name has been unknown, not only to the general reader, but even to the well-informed. In these rooms I have seen the eyelash lifted at mention of Larrovitch.

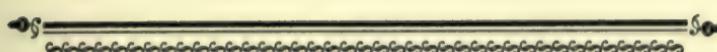
Tonight, we present the evidences and resolve all doubts. On that table are the relics. There is a lock of his hair, and there are the lock and key of his prison. Behold with what embroideries that shirt is adorned. On yonder wall is the portrait, with its haunting suggestion of features somehow familiar. To the story that these silent witnesses bring we shall add testimony. Dr. Titus Munson Coan is here, and he knew Larrovitch and talked with him repeatedly, as he will tell you.

Others will tell you of Larrovitch's qualities, of his struggles and achievements. They will offer their appreciations of his genius. May I make one small contribution of fact, upon which I am perhaps qualified to speak? It was Larrovitch who discovered, or invented, the history of civilization. He foresaw the rise and fall of Kultur, and in discoursing of it he anticipated Her-

## *Feodor Vladimir Larrovitch*

bert Spencer's famous definition of cosmic evolution. "Kultur," said Larrovitch, "is the integration of Hohenzollerns, accompanied by the differentiation and the segregation of nations, and the concomitant dissipation of Teutons." He warned of impending war between Potsdam and civilization, but also he foretold the successful and glorious end.

*Franklin Henry Giddings*



THE PERSONAL SIDE OF

*Larrovitch*

••• WILLIAM GEORGE JORDAN

“I DETEST him!” Katia seemed in earnest. “I detest the way he cuts his beard.” “Oh dear, if you’ve never gotten beyond his beard,” sighed Maria Sergevitch, “you have a lot more to learn about him.”

*From “PROPRE ET ORDONNÉE.”*



IN the little village of Tsubskia in the Caucasus on the 26th of April, 1817 (old style, April 13th) was born Feodor Vladimir Larrovitch, whose work has shed undying glory on Russian literature. From his father's side he inherited Tatar blood, his grandfather being pure Tatar; on his mother's side he fell heir to Polish blood, his mother's people—the Olanskis—being among settlers who came from Poland to Kiev in the early years of the Eighteenth Century.

His father's lineage seems to have been rather commonplace; in fact it was due solely to the maternal side that Feodor inherited the intellectual power that flowered into genius.

His father, Vladimir Serge Larrovitch, was a captain in the army, and while stationed at Kiev met and married the young and beautiful Sophia Feodorovna Olanski. On being ordered to take command of the local barracks at Tsubskia, Larrovitch took his bride thither and it was there that Feodor Vladimir, the sole issue of the marriage, was born.

Life in this little village in the hills would have been rather dull had it not been for the idyllic love of the young people who, as their son said later, in talking with Lanatiére in Paris in 1861, "would have made their Paradise even in a desert if they had had but each other." They were better off in worldly goods than most of their associates, for Sophia inherited, from her father, property which yielded an income that to the husband and wife seemed wealth. Their home, humble though its exterior, was within its walls tastefully furnished.

The principal duties of Captain Larrovitch and his small command were to keep in subjection the brigands that infested the region of over a hundred versts around. They were not exterminated, as the government did not deem it wise to put too much pressure on the activities

## *Feodor Vladimir Larrovitch*

of those so closely allied with the people, who rather sympathized with the brave reckless bands that relieved the rich of their superfluous wealth. The stories of their raids, their secret haunts and their courage stirred and thrilled the imagination of Feodor as Homer's Iliad did the boys of ancient Greece. At night, after he had gone to bed, he listened to his father telling of his experiences with the brigands to his mother who did not know that the boy, supposed to be sleeping, really had his little curly head well away from the pillow, drinking in every word and trembling with excitement and the intensity of his interest.

His mother, a cultured woman, well versed in French, German and Continental literature, undertook the early training of the boy, who at that time was so delicate that it was feared that he could never be a soldier. She confided her fears to the good, kind friend of the family, the local "pope" who conspired with her to convince the elder Larrovitch of the importance of giving Feodor more than a mere military education.

In 1825 when the boy was eight years old, the revolt of the Decembrists broke out. Although this revolt did not reach the Caucasus, and Feodor was too young to realize it, it greatly stirred his mother. The revolt was the first one led by the aristocrats, mostly Polish; it gave color to the revolts that followed and set the custom for revolts against the existing order being led by the intellectual and aristocratic people. Feodor, a nervous, sensitive, imaginative child, heard much of this and of the revolts that followed and though he understood little of the details, it somehow was a vital, intensifying influence in his life.

As a child, he was loved by all and, in his play hours,





*The mother of Larrovitch, who was Sophia  
Feodorovna Olanski of Kiev*



*Captain Vladimir Serge Larrovitch,  
father of Larrovitch*

## *The Personal Side of Larrovitch*

was usually the center of a group of boys of the village, telling them stories of brigands, of soldiers and of patriots. The name by which the older folk usually greeted him, with a smile or a kindly pat on the head as he passed them on the road, was "Malinki Tsoube," which being translated means "the little well-beloved."

His mother often told him (as he relates in a letter to Dostoievsky, dated May 19, 1864), of his Polish ancestors. "Remember, Feodor, that your ancestor Ivan Olanski saved the life of his king, Sigismund I, in 1519, as he led his army at the battle of Poldo. The fighting blood of more than ten generations of Poles flows in your veins. Remember ever that you must fight. Should ill-health keep you from fighting with your sword, fight with your mind, fight with your heart, fight with your soul, fight for freedom, for right, for truth, for justice. Let it never be said that an Olanski knew fear or hesitation in the face of wrong or oppression." "It was not until years afterward," added Larrovitch, "that I realized that I could fight for freedom with my pen."

Two other influences in the boyhood of Feodor were virile formative elements in shaping his genius, in making the child the man, big with power, purpose and possibility to do the work that will be undying in the history of Russia. Some of his biographers have treated his father rather slightly. They have failed to recognize his great sense of justice, so intense that it seemed an obsession, and for many versts around Tsubskia, the people, who came to him as arbiter of their differences instead of going to law, called him "Vladimir, the Supremely Just." In the light of this, the passion for justice that guided and inspired the son need cause no wonder as to whence it came. From the "little pope,"

## *Feodor Vladimir Larrovitch*

there was instilled into his heart and soul, a great spirituality; it persisted and it inspired, in the later years, the bitterness of his scourging of the bigotry, graft and superstition of the church.

I have given in some detail the formative forces of his childhood that dominated his later life. To me they seem vital and fundamental if we are to understand Larrovitch aright. I pass merely sketchily and suggestively over the later years of his life because in their main lines they are doubtless familiar to you all, and should there be any here tonight to whom perchance they are not known, it would be taxing your courtesy unduly to delay you with facts so easily accessible in all the encyclopedias and histories. As to his books and the critical estimate of what Lanatiére calls "the miracles of Larrovitch's pen," I shall say but a word. This will be told you tonight by more eloquent lips than mine, but—may I say it with humility?—with no more profound reverence than fills my own soul. I toss aside with contempt much of our contemporary literature, but I am thrilled, inspired, calmed and regenerated in the magic pages of the master genius of Russian literature—Larrovitch.

At fifteen he entered the preparatory school, and in his nineteenth year he entered the University of Kiev to study medicine. In spite of the university teaching he managed to acquire sufficient knowledge of medicine, with a little history and literature on the side, to secure his degree. He never practiced medicine as a money-earning profession, but his knowledge made him later a ministering angel to the poor prisoners in Siberia and to the villagers near, whom he was permitted to help.

After completing his university course, he chose to tutor in history and to take up the life of the intellectual

## *The Personal Side of Larrovitch*

colony of the University, and writing short essays and poems for the magazines and journals from his twenty-fifth to his twenty-eighth year, when his first great romance came. It had an ending that was absolutely new in his love affairs—he married! This was in 1845.

The lady was Sonia Sirota. She was a Russian actress, young, beautiful, fascinating, sympathetic, clever in an unconventional way, and she swept him off his feet. It was a rare love story—but it was not to last. Only a month after the birth of a daughter, whom he called Sophia in honor of his mother, he was seated at a table writing; Sonia, on the edge of his chair with her arm around his neck and her head close to his, was reading aloud a sentence or a paragraph that delighted them both. The door suddenly opened; two gendarmes entered with a warrant for his arrest. It was a lightning stroke. Prostrated with grief, Sonia saw him taken away. He was crushed. But nerving himself and thinking only of her, he said, with that sweet smile of his, “*Sonia, deshunka, it is all a mistake. Soon will I return.*” He lied bravely—as a man should.

The trial was brief, farcically so. The charge was the teaching of seditious doctrines—just what, is not known. Some Russian critics say he attacked the dogmas of the church; others charge clerical “graft” in connection with the State. He was sentenced to Siberia for five years. The parting between the married lovers was heart-rending. Sonia was in an agony of despair; and sobbing, she declared that even God could never in all the years console her for his absence. A young French lieutenant, however, succeeded two months later in accomplishing what it had been declared impossible for a Higher Power to do in five years, and the couple fled to

## *Feodor Vladimir Larrovitch*

Paris—taking with them the child, Sophia.

Larrovitch was sent first to Irkutsk where he served six months in the local *étape* and the remainder of the sentence in a small village on the shores of Lake Baikal—Baikalskaia.

Of his prison life we know comparatively little. It was during this period of banishment that the divine spark in Larrovitch's soul burst into flame. He had dabbled in literature, but now it became a crusade, a holy mission, a fight for the big things of life, a fight with his pen. Unlike Dostoievsky who made "copy" out of his prison life, Larrovitch found in it inspiration. From the crushed grapes of his years of individual sorrow, he pressed wine of inspiration for the world. He never wrote about what happened to him; he merely let these long years as a mighty regenerating influence cleanse his soul of all bitterness, pettiness and superficiality; he was filled with a divine ambition to begin his great life work.

On his long trip home from Siberia one idea dominated his mind—it was the joy of his home-coming to Sonia, his wife. She was the center of every thought of his waking moments, the atmosphere of his sleeping dreams. He finally reached Kiev; he ran all the way from the station to his little home. The place had been rented to new tenants; kind neighbors gently broke the story of his tragedy to him. He was prostrated and for three months suffered from brain-fever in the hospital at Kiev, being nursed by his mother, now widowed. Then in the days of convalescence, the mighty purpose of his life came back to him and with restored health he went to St. Petersburg—now Petrograd—for he could never live again at Kiev.

Here he had a love affair with Hedwig Carlotta

## *The Personal Side of Larrovitch*

Hjärne, a Swedish lady of high social standing and keen literary judgment, sojourning with friends at the legation. That they were married is disputed, but she was a loyal companion to him for two years. The story that she was a Swedish masseuse has been denied with clear evidence of its falsity, as is shown by Ivan Bartinski in his fascinatingly indiscreet volume "Larrovitch and His Loves," published in Moscow in 1893. With his morals or his immorals, in this and in later episodes, we have naught to do. At their worst, they form but a small mortgage on the fine estate of his noble character, his splendid mind and his rare soul.

Finding the life at St. Petersburg too distracting for his literary work, he went to Tver where he spent some years. He was now in the full swing of his wonderful productive career. He wrote slowly but rarely revised. At this time he planned and blocked out his great trilogy, the three novels on Education, Justice, and Love as the essentials of all true freedom. This trilogy was not completed till 1881, the year of his death.

In 1863 he went to Paris, for, alone in the world, he had now no ties. His mother had died leaving him an annuity which, while not large, gave him a certain freedom. His French publishers invited him to the capital to work out details of the serial publication of "Vyvodne,"—"The Right to Marriage"—then completed. He also wanted to be in closer touch with the Russian revolutionary branch established in Paris. His counsel, his plans, his organization, were the secret springs of many movements for freedom where his hand was never publicly known.

His five years in Paris were the happiest of his life; he was honored, feted and admired; he was gleaning the

## *Feodor Vladimir Larrovitch*

harvest of his years of work. His genius, his wit, his sympathy, his brilliant conversation, keen philosophy, and that sweet smile of his that was characteristic, won him friends here as they had done in Russia. He loved freedom as the supreme gift of life; he loved America, which he called "the Land of the Great Hope," watched with feverish interest in those dark hours of our Civil War the daily struggle when the fate of the world's great democracy trembled in the balance. He contributed articles on the War to *Le Temps*, and at the Sorbonne he delivered two series of lectures on "Russian History" and "The Awakening of the Russian People."

In 1868, at the age of 51, he returned to Tver where he passed the remaining years of his life, occupied with the writing of his books, his contributions of essays to magazines, and occasional lectures. In 1880, his constitution, weakened by his years in Siberia and the ardor of his later literary labors, broke down. His clear mind and his knowledge of medicine made him realize it was the beginning of the end. He wanted only to live long enough to complete "Gospodi Pomi," the last volume in his great trilogy. He worked day and night feverishly in his battle against time and on February 18, 1881, the manuscript was completed.

Weak, worn, and but a shadow of his former self, he left Tver for Yalta, that delightful summer resort of the Crimea at the foot of the Haila Mountains, on the edge of the sea. The balmy air seemed to revive him for a little; he seemed better but he knew it was but seeming, not reality. Early in March he had to take to the bed from which he never rose.

On the afternoon of the 13th of March he was resting quietly, when the shrill call of newsboys shouting an

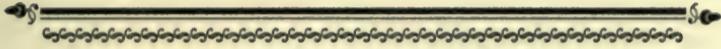
## *The Personal Side of Larrovitch*

“extra” came through the open window. He raised himself with difficulty, leaned on one arm and listened. “Assassination of Alexander II” were the unbelievable words that he heard. Alexander, the great reformer, the liberator of the serfs, had been killed! Falling back on his pillow he murmured, “Oh, my poor, blinded countrymen, oh, the folly of it and the shame! You have put out the light of Russia’s liberty”—and then, silence.

The great heart of Larrovitch was stilled forever.

*William George Jordan*





# *Larrovitch's*

## PLACE IN LITERATURE

••• M'CREADY SYKES

WHAT did I read in Siberia? All manner of books—scores, hundreds of them. But the naming of them would mean little to you, as they meant little to me then. That is the great weakness with men who write—they depend entirely too much on books. In Siberia I read books to pass the time, for learning I read Nature—I read into the mystery of the stars and was taught breadth of mind from the far-flung horizon of the steppes, and the mountain peaks reaching into the sky led me upward from mundane things.

*From a letter to RADZILL, the sculptor.*



I suppose that wherever this day is being celebrated, wherever men are gathered together—as in so many far separate places they are gathered together—reverent comment is being made on the extraordinary coincidence whereby rumblings of the tremendous event foretold by the greatest Russian of the 19th Century should be stirring the world within a few months before the centenary of his birth. Wherever men are paying tribute to the work and memory of Feodor Vladimir Larrovitch, there assuredly are they pointing out the almost uncanny coincidence that the revolution, for which the influence of Larrovitch is above all others responsible, should have been attempted on the very eve of this sacred anniversary.

How slow is the recognition of fame, oh! how swift its course and how irresistible its momentum when the weighing and sifting have been done and the judgment of mankind once formulated! When Larrovitch died, thirty-six years ago, few in this country had the slightest acquaintance with his work. In France only the scholarly voice of Lanatiére; in England a single essay of Mr. Edmund Gosse—this covers almost the whole of the published recognition a generation ago of the now acknowledged master of Russian literature. I sometimes think those are to be envied whose first acquaintance with a great writer comes before fame has arrived; they have the thrill of discovery; before the wonder of it they stand like Keats' misplaced navigator: "Silent, upon a peak in Darien."

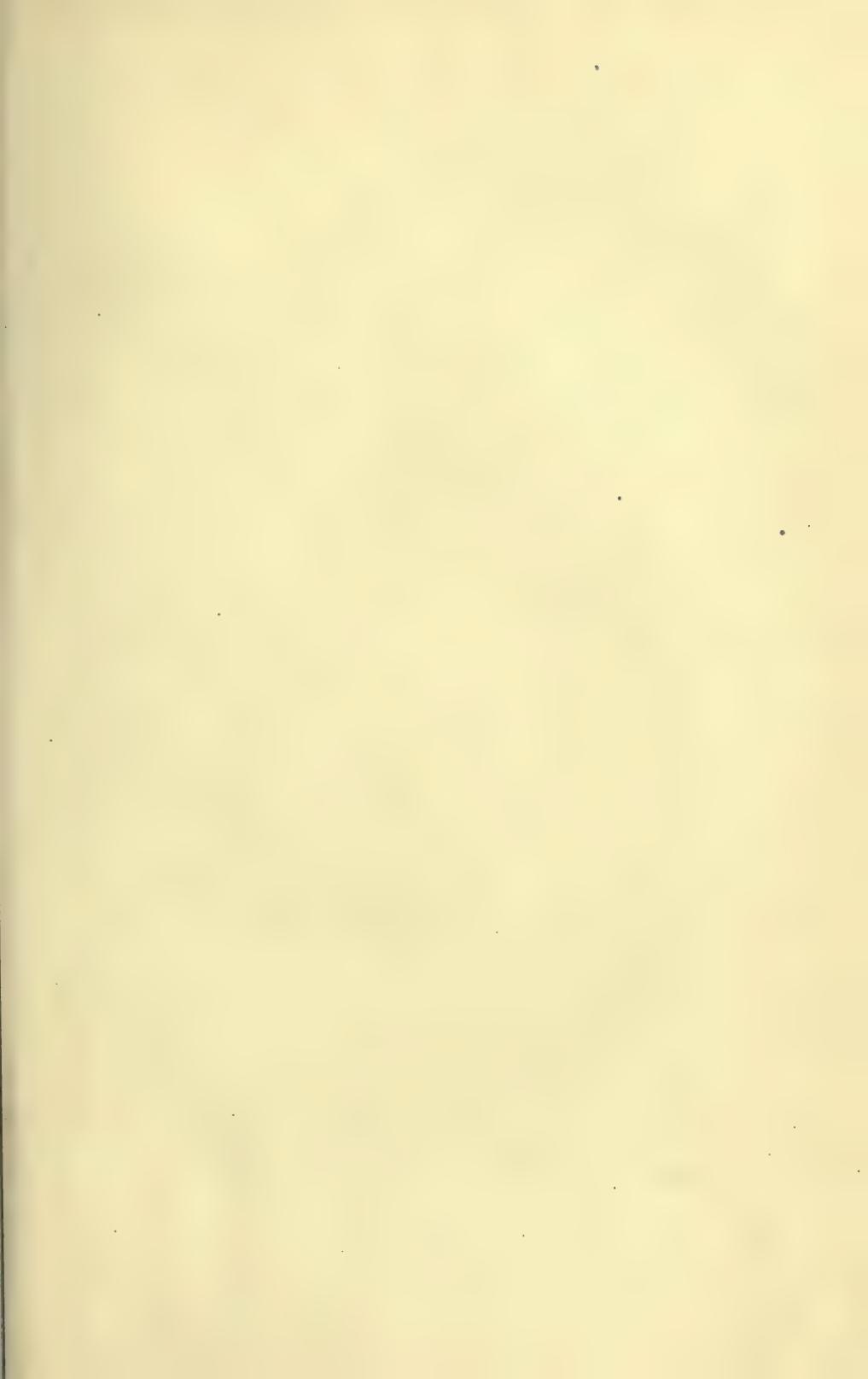
Larrovitch was contemporary with the three great Russian novelists, Dostoievsky, Turgeniev and Tolstoi. The span of his life almost coincided with those of the first two. Born in 1817, he was four years older than Dostoievsky, and they died within two months of each other. Turgeniev, born in 1818, one year younger than Larrovitch, survived him by two years. It was the ar-

## *Feodor Vladimir Larrovitch*

rival of these four great men at the first maturity of their power that marked the beginning of modern Russian fiction, a little before the middle of the century.

If, through the veil of mysticism that obscures all Russian writers, we can trace the outlines of their theme, we shall see in each of them the preacher of a fairly coherent gospel of life. That is, Russian literature is suffused by philosophy to a degree not reached in occidental fiction. And when we speak of literature on one side of the parallel and fiction on the other, it must be remembered that in Russia the novel is the exponent and medium of philosophy, religion and the whole theory of life. The thought of Russia finds expression in the novel as it does not find expression in England, France, Germany or the United States. And it is only occasionally, as in the case of Mr. Hardy, that we find a writer who through the medium of the novel consistently sets forth, or rather suggests and adumbrates, a theory of life and the most profound speculations on the nature of reality and the whole problem of God and the moral order.

Now it is that kind of approach that we find used by the Russian novelists. Each of them has given a vision—not with the sharp and clear-cut outlines familiar to our western modes of thought, but vague, indefinite—sometimes formless almost—a vision of the shadowy, tenuous kind, shot through with the mysticism that betrays how vastly nearer to the orient than we are, is great amorphous Russia, with her mysticism, her shadowy, elusive quality that baffles western analysis. I sometimes wonder whether Mr. Kipling was right. “East is East and West is West,” but is it true that never the twain shall meet? Do they not meet and pre-



Письмо Козака.

Грустно, о мамъ, грустно  
Душамъ о родахъ въ присягъ сорванныхъ  
И непечаткайши душевинъ!

Грустно, о мамъ, грустно,  
За помадъ бѣ бѣзъ упрекъ!

Но еже грустнѣй за бѣзъ имадъ!  
Онъ гидемъ на мѣсъ рода  
Онъ гидемъ по зѣбу уасъ!

Анна Ларрович

*A page from the Ms. of "Crasny Baba" in Larrovitch's  
handwriting. Now in possession of the Authors Club*

## *Larrovitch's Place in Literature*

sent an aspect of both in the mysterious land that is itself half European and half Asiatic?

In an age when the struggle for civil and political freedom seemed hopeless, Dostoievsky, that strange, crushed, baffled, unhappy hypochondriac, epileptic, the victim of shattered nerves, looked at mankind through a temperament as illusory, as distorting as the veil of Maya. You remember how, in early manhood, with fiendish cruelty that bears witness to the thoroughness of their German training, the Russian officials had taken Dostoievsky and twenty-two other prisoners on an undisclosed political charge, and how, after eight months in jail without hearing or even formal accusation, the prisoners were suddenly taken one morning into the public square, where stood a scaffold, and were told that sentence of death had been passed on them. They were blindfolded and ranged for summary execution; the signal to aim was given, and suddenly at the last moment announcement was made that the Emperor had graciously commuted their sentence to imprisonment. Few men could live through such an experience and ever again have the old strength of spiritual texture. We must read Dostoievsky's interpretation in the light of his sufferings, of the meagerness, squalor and terror of his earlier life; his happy fortunes came later.

You know, of course, how Dostoievsky solved the problem of the moral order. It was Parsifal's formula—*durch Mitleid wissen*—enlightenment through compassion, compassion in its etymological sense of suffering together, expiation, salvation by pity. It doesn't seem wholly sane and healthy, any more than it does in Wagner's work, and, of course, to call Dostoievsky sane or healthy would be to put a strain on adjectives of ap-

## *Feodor Vladimir Larrovitch*

probation that would tax the literary ability of the Ninety-three German Intellectuals. Dostoievsky's characters are all angels or beasts. No one is normal. Life as he shows it is not normal. He is very distinctly an acquired taste.

Turgeniev left Russia at forty-two, never to return except at rare intervals. He represented the liberals, as opposed to Dostoievsky, who was the exponent of the Slavophiles. As his work progressed he seemed to become convinced of the futility of the revolutionary aims, and grew almost bitter. His work at all times displayed the rare culture, precision and clearness which gave him during his own life his great European fame, to be eclipsed by that of Tolstoi in the generation into which Tolstoi lived after Turgeniev's death.

Tolstoi, whose fame was afterwards surpassed by the great master whose birthday we celebrate tonight, even as Tolstoi had overtaken Turgeniev, was eight or ten years younger than Dostoievsky and Turgeniev, and, born in 1828, hardly felt the influence of the revolutions of 1848. He was neither Slavophile nor liberal; he gradually developed the doctrine of non-resistance with which the world has become familiar, sometimes unpleasantly so, and avowed himself a true Nihilist, that is, as he himself expressed it, "subject to no faith or creed whatever."

This is not the time for a discussion of these three great names in Russian literature. I mention them merely to recall the groping, the almost blind groping, of the greatest literary creative minds of Russia, to show how a new and vital impulse was given to the body of Russian thought by the great genius who is honored wherever men are gathered together in memory of the

## *Larrovitch's Place in Literature*

greatest name in the annals of Russian literature, the name of Larrovitch.

Larrovitch's genius, self-determined and transcendent as it was, was slow in finding expression. At first his note was one of protest. What among his contemporaries seemed the dawning of the light—that false dawn that led so many noble intellects down the dance of futile aspiration—was comprehended by him with the vivid insight of genius. It was dreaming an old dream. The phrase occurs constantly through his earlier work—“dreaming an old dream.” But Larrovitch was gifted with an insight more profound than the grim pity of Dostoievsky, the sentimentality of Turgeniev or the weak renunciation of Tolstoi. The same sun that melts wax hardens clay. With all his mysticism, with all the Slavic color and half oriental temperament, Larrovitch had philosophic insight, mental processes that were splendidly inductive, the scientific method of the European mind. For the dreaming of the old dream he had the true sympathy of the Slav, but he had what had never been granted to Dostoievsky, Turgeniev or Tolstoi, what in an earlier day had been unknown to Gogol or even to the cosmopolitan Pushkin; he had the intellectual grasp of nineteenth century Europe.

Virile as was the genius of the great Russian, the note of tenderness that suffuses so much of his work frequently suggests the query as to the influence upon him of the women with whom he was brought in contact, and most of all, of his wife. Her sudden elopement with a French officer within two months of Larrovitch's sentence of exile is one of the mysteries of literary biography, for the life of Larrovitch and his wife had seemed a true romance made real. What was the vague cause of unrest

## *Feodor Vladimir Larrovitch*

that finally culminated in the blow has never been really known. Their daily life had been marked by a singular felicity of adjustment. With his passionate love of nature, Larrovitch would spend hours along the streams, observing aquatic phenomena, often taking by nets or lines the fish for contemplation, or perhaps bringing them home to help out the plain fare that then marked the fine simplicity of the master's household. His wife meanwhile, in an age when the ideas of commerce and manufacturing had hardly penetrated the mind of Russia, was keenly interested in all kinds of textiles, silks, linens, cottons, everything of the sort. In fact, she would accumulate from among the neighbors during the week, picturesque panniers or baskets of these fabrics, soiled by usage or wear, and by the application of saponaceous agents and enthusiastic personal labor would work far into the night demonstrating the chemical reactions and cleansing effects of her various devices aided by her own physical efforts. It was science aided by muscle, and the stipendiary emoluments exacted by Larrovitch's wife from the owners of the garments, a kind of honorarium willingly rendered did, in the trying days of the *res angustae domi*, help things out considerably. Often, too, while these practical chemical and economic demonstrations were being carried on by his energetic consort, Larrovitch would lend to local groups the benefit of his broad vision and clear insight, giving to his contemporaries by the spoken word the clearest commentary on the tangled web of European public life.

During these happy days arose the outrageous slander that Larrovitch went fishing and talked politics while his wife took in washing. The libel was inspired by a malicious interpretation of a thoroughly harmonious

## *Larrovitch's Place in Literature*

apportionment of vocation and avocation based not less on the respective abilities of the life-partners than on their varying temperaments. The highly symbolical remark attributed to Larrovitch's wife on her flight with the French officer—"Thank God, I've washed my last shirt!"—baffling as its deeper significance seems, should not be interpreted in the light of any such crassly materialistic conception.

Larrovitch's first book, "Crasny Baba"—"The Red Woman"—a collection of short stories, adolescent scraps, appeared in 1852, when he was thirty-five years old. It is of varying merit. Most of the sketches are of a thousand words or so; naturally no attempt is made at a systematic philosophy. Indeed, the whole work is still too charged with symbolism for that. An almost Carlylean transcendental rhapsodic treatment is much in evidence. Here is the famous "Address to the Samovar," said by some of his critics to be full of a very subtle symbolism, which we must frankly confess passes quite over the heads of us occidentals.

In his late twenties Larrovitch was delving deep in the profound searchings of Kant. Although thoroughly at home in German, he seems to have taken no interest in philosophy till Kant began to circulate in Russia in the vulgar tongue. We must remember that Kant was not translated into Russian until after 1830, so that to Larrovitch's ardent mind the "Critique of Pure Reason" was projected against the background of Alexander I's apostacy from liberalism and Nicholas I's frank policy of reaction. To Larrovitch it then seemed that Kant with his philosophy, trudging back and forth at Koenigsburg and never traveling a hundred miles from home, had come nearer the eternal verities than the po-

## Feodor Vladimir Larrovitch

itical leaders of the days of '48. Larrovitch anticipated Hegel in his development of the conception of existence as a flowing stream, a process of becoming, and in his second work, "Ivan Soronko," published in 1859, he flung a bold challenge alike to the Slavophile propaganda of Dostoevsky and the gentle liberalism of Turgeniev. "There is nothing good but a good will." In this profound saying of Kant he read the future of human development, and in the splendid character of *Ivan Soronko* he symbolized the spirit of the liberation of Russia. *Soronko* was portrayed as one of the great Cossack brigands, a kind of glorified *Robin Hood*, the incarnation of the Transcendent Will. The conception was a purely spiritual one, a conception worked out in great detail in Larrovitch's correspondence with Mazzini. Indeed, Mazzini has stated in more than one of his letters that his vision of a free Italy was little more than the filled out and complete idealization of the noble symbolism of *Ivan Soronko*. "It was from Russia," writes Mazzini, "that I learned the sublimity, the grandeur, the divine form of that free Italy that throughout my life, often in exile and against the onslaught of every opportunist from Piedmont to the Sicilies, I preached to my countrymen."

"Chorny Khleb"—"Black Bread"—was published in 1860, one year after "Ivan Soronko." Like its predecessor, it had a tremendous vogue. It is a collection of peasant stories, big, strong stories, each with a resonant thought. Men wondered how the author had attained such insight into the peasant soul. Here again Larrovitch preached the gospel of the spiritual awakening. Here we see the reflex influence of Mazzini, many passages recalling the most eloquent preachings of the

## *Larrovitch's Place in Literature*

### **"Duties of Man."**

Larrovitch had in full measure the saving virtue of humor, and in more than one of these stories he plays with gentle irony on the grim and mordant despairing horrors of Dostoievsky. One of these stories, "The Love Affairs of the Philosophic Pig," so aroused the wrath of Dostoievsky's followers that one of them challenged Larrovitch to a duel, to whom Larrovitch wrote in reply: "Surely no writer has a monopoly of scene and setting. In choosing the piggst for a frankly humorous tale, have I offended by peopling it with pigs instead of men?"

In the '60's Larrovitch made a long sojourn in Paris, where he perceived with clearer vision than most Europeans the utterly unsubstantial foundation of Louis Napoleon's empire. Here, in 1866, he wrote "Vvodne"—"The Right to Marriage"—published simultaneously in France and Russia. This was his one sex novel. In Russia, as in the German army today, one had to marry within his own caste, and Larrovitch apprehended with clear vision how rapidly the caste system was again growing up in France on the ruins of the republic. The coup d'etat was a social as well as a political usurpation. In this work, under thinly veiled symbolism, Larrovitch suggested a separation of the functions of marriage, those of affection, sympathy and companionship, from those having to do with the propagation of the race; frankly inquiring whether the acceptance or the refusal of human parentage should not be left entirely to the decision of the woman. The doctrine was afterwards wittily paraphrased by an American critic—a member, by the way, of this club, still happily with us—as "local option on maternity." The suggestion of the separation into its component parts of the dual-purpose marriage

## *Feodor Vladimir Larrovitch*

has since been exploited, playfully perhaps, by Mr. Bernard Shaw in one of his characteristic prefaces.

It was in Paris that the great inspiration came into Larrovitch's life and work, an inspiration, it is interesting to note, from our side of the water. Larrovitch followed with absorbing interest the fortunes of our Civil War, 1861-1865. He frequently referred to America as "the Great Hope." Larrovitch's friendship with Turgeniev had its inspiring bond in their common work for the emancipation of the serfs, and although during the time when this was actually going on, Larrovitch was in Paris, he was following the situation in Russia with keen interest.

You know how, with the freeing of the serfs, Turgeniev regarded the great aspiration of his life fulfilled, and, indeed, Turgeniev had done much to bring it about; but as time went on and he saw how narrow was the scope of the hoped-for regeneration, he became embittered. Not so with Larrovitch; from the very first he regarded the freeing of the serfs as hardly more than the outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace not yet given to men, as a faint symbol rather of the mighty spiritual awakening to which he devoted the working of his genius.

In that wonderful little story of his, "Swept and Garnished," a sketch of less than six thousand words, he preaches by means of clear allegory his persistent creed that the awakening of Russia must come in the souls of the Russian people—the eternal application of the truth of the saying of the fourth gospel. "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." Larrovitch was impatient of Tolstoi's doctrine of renunciation and non-resistance; he looked on Dostoievsky's

## *Larrovitch's Place in Literature*

morbid apotheosis of squalor, suffering and disease as a teaching almost degenerate; he anticipated, long before the bitter truth had come home to Turgenieff himself, the smugness, the sheer futility of mere preachments of political liberalism. "And the truth shall make you free." When the soul of Russia should once have come to true self-determination, when the Transcendent Will should have actually become incarnate, when the spiritual emancipation should be complete—then no more dreaming an old dream. The *élan vital* of Bergson is a crude, inadequate, almost mechanical conception of the Absolute compared with what Larrovitch describes as the Transcendent Will—the developed conception, in the light of the scientific thought of the nineteenth century, of that Will wherein Kant had found the moving power of all that is good. Larrovitch resolved the Kantian antinomies by means of a conception of the Will as the ultimate form of functioning of the Absolute, transcending the Kantian limitations of time and space as fundamental and necessary categories of the understanding, making time and space rather modes of the Transcendent Will. His insistence on the objective reality of time and space, a position puzzling to critics in the early '70's, must be apprehended in the light of his thoroughly dynamic conception of the Absolute, and of his anticipation, now quite obvious, of the profounder conclusions of pragmatism.

In 1870, after his return from Paris, Larrovitch published what is usually, and I think rightly, regarded as his magnum opus, "Barin! Barin!"—"Master! Master!" a work so vast, so tersely compact, so expressive that it is one of the most elusive, most difficult of analyses. The strange character of Dmetri Trepoff, the old chem-

## *Feodor Vladimir Larrovitch*

ist with his troupe of whistling marmots, is used as a symbolic *leitmotif*. In an old retort from his laboratory, Dmitri has imprisoned the principle of life, and as the weird bizarre figure moves through the story, transforming the country groups of children with a wave of his curious bottle, stealing to the throne-room of the emperor and leaving the bewildered courtiers with blanched faces and quaking knees, the effect of his presence is "incalculably diffusive," to use George Eliot's phrase. In Russia they had always lived under some form of control. The freeing of the serfs called for a new kind of master, and this master was to be Education. As in the United States the South after the war suffered from carpetbag control, so in Russia after the freeing of the serfs did the country suffer from ignorance. Russia must be saved by truth.

In 1879, when Larrovitch was working easily in the fine maturity of his great powers, he published "Dvornik" — "The Keeper of the Door." In Russia one's personal servant sleeps on a mat outside the door. In this keeper of the door Larrovitch typified the guardian of the democracy that he foretold as coming to the world. The keynote is Justice, Justice the Protector of Democracy. With clearer vision than any of his contemporaries Larrovitch had seen the pernicious effect of the German influence creeping over Russia, and in that familiar chapter so much quoted in recent years he predicts with almost uncanny prescience the world war. This book has been called the story of the American spirit in Russia, and it is here that Larrovitch makes *Ivan Tyumen* say in his address to the nobles: "Mistake not the need. Mistake it not. For the coming empire of the people we must have a world that shall be safe"—a striking





*An alleged portrait of Larrovitch as a young man, taken from a group painted at the time of Larrovitch's exile in Irkutsk by a native artist*



*The last portrait of Larrovitch, said to have been made shortly before his death. The original hangs in the Traitokoff Museum in Moscow*

## *Larrovitch's Place in Literature*

anticipation of President Wilson's great pronouncement  
—“We must make the world safe for democracy.”

In 1881, shortly after his death appeared “Gospodi Pomi,”—“Lord Have Mercy.” This work sets forth in greater amplitude the essentials of his philosophy; artistically it is, I believe, somewhat overweighted by its didactic burden. But it is a grand legacy to his people—a legacy, indeed, to men of liberal thought in all times and all nations. In it he rises to the height of the great argument, and justifies the ways of God to man. Here the splendid optimism of his nature guides him to the summit whence the world-vision is one of ineffable grandeur; for the first time in Russian literature is the high note struck of absolute faith in a universe wherein there is no lawlessness, no confusion of plan, a universe slowly evolving to the realization of the divine plan wherein man and all his boundless capacities are seen as the fine flower and fruition of the Transcendent Will.

When Larrovitch died, it was truly said by the foremost English critic, in a letter which for political reasons it was for more than twenty years deemed unwise to publish:—“Larrovitch's work is done. From this moment the Russian revolution is inevitable, but now we have learned that it must be founded on a spiritual awakening.” The assassin's bomb that almost as the master was breathing his last, blew Alexander II into eternity, served but to delay the time.

The best memorial to Larrovitch's genius is the definitive centenary edition just published in fourteen volumes. It includes the well-known biography by Mazhenov, a collection of his inimitable letters, his masterly contribution to science and his heretofore unpublished diary in Siberia.

## *Feodor Vladimir Larrovitch*

In this brief outline I have tried, how imperfectly I realize, to indicate the rank of this great name. It is to Germany, with the towering genius of Goethe, to England, with the clear supremacy of Shakespeare, that we must look for a fitting parallel. Whether in the long course of the evaluation by posterity of the work of the great ones on earth, when our descendants shall, as the centuries go by, gather to praise famous men, Larrovitch's place shall be taken by some other, it were presumptuous to hazard a guess. What new names may then be on men's lips we may not say. Today, all over the world is there accord of judgment. Tonight we but speak the verdict of contemporary civilization when upon the wreath with which we crown that brow, noble and serene in death, we inscribe the words:

*"Feodor Vladimir Larrovitch, supreme master of Russian thought, prophet of the world's dream come true."*

*M'Cready Sykes*

---

SOME TRANSLATIONS FROM

*Larrovitch*

• RICHARDSON WRIGHT

“**Y**es, the dead live,” said Father Sergius. There was a look of distance in his eye and a great peace lighted his countenance. “I am sure of that. We should not mourn for them, we should rejoice. They can be very close to us.”

“And how?” asked the old man.

“They are dead if we wish them dead. They live if we wish them to live. They will be far away if we wish them far away. They will be very near if we wish them very near. Love is the secret. Love gives them life. Love brings them close to us. Do you understand?”

But the *starosta* did not understand.

*From “BARIN! BARIN!”*



## *Dawn on the Steppe\**

SONIA awoke with a start.

She glanced around the room, her eyes half opened.

Gradually the memory of the night came to her—the ghastly memory of that bacchanale.

With a weary hand she brushed the hair back from her temples, letting its thick black curls cascade down her snowy white shoulders and over the lace of her night-gown.

In a cot bed on the other side of the room by the stove lay Peter Ivanovitch. Loose and limp like a damp rag his arm hung over the side. His face was still purple from the drinking of the night before. He lay as he had fallen into the bed—with half his clothes on, although in compassion for him Sonia had removed his boots which were soiling the sheets.

The house was very still. Outside a dog barked. Two others answered mournfully.

Sonia glanced about, bewildered at the chaos of the room—the table with the remains of the wedding feast, the empty bottles, the scattered bits of cake, the broken goblets on the floor.

A shiver shook her like October wind the aspen.

On a chair by the bed lay her clothes in orderly array. Sonia had been well brought up by the best of mothers, and even at the end of her tempestuous wedding night had not forgotten to be neat about her underlinen.

She glanced again at Peter Ivanovitch, and then cautiously slid out of bed. As her toes touched the cold floor, she shivered and gathered the nightgown about her.

[A description here, presumably of how Sonia put on her linen, has been censored by the Holy Synod in the

\*From "Vyvodne"

## *Feodor Vladimir Larrovitch*

interest of morals.]

Sonia slowly opened the door and passed out into the hall.

No one was up in the house. From the porter's room came muffled snores. She tiptoed down the passage, quietly pushed back the great wooden bolt, and went out into the street.

The house stood on the edge of the town. Beyond lay the barns and pastures of the Ivanovitch farm. Rapidly Sonia made her way past them and came to the edge of the steppe. There it lay, a great, flat, gray blanket of snow stretching to the horizon. Never a tree, never a bush. Only the beaten road before her that zigzagged off like a brown snake. On the horizon two parallel shafts widened across the gray sky. Slowly they converged. The sun broke out, the snow changed from dun to silver—a great sea crested with white waves.

The air was deathly still. Smoke from a chimney in the town rose straight like a ramrod into the cool, crisp blue air.

Sonia turned. Tears stood in her eyes.

Must she go back to him?

She gathered her shawl tighter about her. Must she go?

From the church tower boomed the first bell. It ricocheted, hummed and died down the street.

There was a rattle of pails. A lone dog poked its nose and came slowly toward Sonia. She glanced down at it. It would soon be a mother. The thought was revolting to her.

At the farther end of the street a woman in a red shawl crossed with two pails swinging from a bar over her shoulder.



# *Larrovitch Centenary Celebration*

*April 26, 1817—April 26, 1917*

*I*N recognition of the genius of Feodor Vladimir Larrovitch, the great Russian novelist, poet and patriot and to do honor to his memory, the Authors Club will hold a centenary celebration, at the club rooms, on April 26th at 9 P. M., the one hundredth anniversary of his birth.

A program fitting to the occasion has been prepared. It includes papers by members, recollections of the great author, stereopticon views of Larrovitch's home and the places touching his life, an exhibition of Larrovitch relics and the presentation to the club of an authentic mss. from the pages of "Crasny Baba."

**The Committee**

*Invitation to the Larrovitch Centenary Celebration held at  
the Authors Club, April 26th, 1917*

## *Some Translations from Larrovitch*

Sonia threw back her head resolutely and drank in the air. A little wind wafted down breeze the rich odor from the cattle byres.

It bred a thought. Her eyes glistened.

Slowly she started to retrace her steps. She was weeping. Tears coursed down her face. Between the bars of its window a milch cow contemplated her languidly.

She stumbled on.

### *The Samovar\**

WHEN Maria saw Father Sergius turn in the yard, she flew to the stove and filled the samovar with fresh coals and water.

In the front room, her father, the *starosta*, waited. Each afternoon Father Sergius came up the long village street, stopped on the way to speak a word or two with the people of his tiny parish, and then turned into the house of the town elder for his glass of tea. He had been doing this now ever since he came to Novo-Birsk, some seven years, and the *starosta* and he had grown to be as brothers. Sometimes the priest would talk of things the old man could not understand, but that made no difference because often enough their talk would turn on things he did understand—crops and spring plowing, the fowls and the need of a new barn for the *mir* or repairs to the church.

“Maria, he’s coming,” called the old man.

“I have the samovar ready,” she replied from the kitchen.

At that moment Father Sergius thumped up the steps. Maria ran to open the door and greet him on the thresh-

\*From “Barin! Barin!”

## *Feodor Vladimir Larrovitch*

old. He came in, threw his hat on the table and kissed the *starosta* on both cheeks as was his custom.

“And how are you this afternoon, my brother?” It was the usual opening of their conversation, never varying from season to season.

“Well enough, thank God,” answered the *starosta*.

Father Sergius seated himself across from the old man at the table, and Maria brought in the samovar, placing it between them. There was naught of worldliness about Father Sergius. His cassock was worn through the elbows and ragged on hem and cuffs. It bore the stains of many a meal. His hair, too, was unkempt and his thin beard scraggly. A large mole pronounced the bridge of his nose. His hands were soiled and gnarled; one thumb was in a bandage. He had been working in the glebe all the forenoon. But for all this dirt a light shone in his countenance as of one who has looked on The Thing unafraid.

Slowly he poured out the *starosta*’s tea, then a glass for himself, and settled back in his chair. The old man was peculiarly taciturn. His great rugged face, seamed and wrinkled like a boulder of granite, held a patient look. All peasants have that look—that thick, uncomprehending wonder.

For some time neither of them spoke.

It was Father Sergius who first broke the silence. “Andrew, what would we do without the samovar?”

The *starosta* shook his head.

“Behold it! It glistens like the countenance of a good man! It pours forth the warmth of friendship! Within its heart glow the kindly coals! And see how strong it stands, how well-formed, how broad shouldered! Watch the aspiring clouds of steam that pour from it and float

## *Some Translations from Larrovitch*

upward toward Heaven! Look at the little *chainik*\* resting there comfortably on the top, like a child in its mother's arms! See the glasses and saucers that cluster about its feet, like the little chicks about the feet of the mother hen! See, it reflects your face and mine, it makes us brothers, it warms our hearts! How noble it is, how beautiful, how humble in service!"

"It should be," muttered the *starosta*, "it cost ten roubles."

*Richardson Wright*

\*Tea pot



---

THREE INCIDENTAL POEMS OF  
*Larrovitch*

by GEORGE SIDNEY HELLMAN

You must remember that we Russians are a singing people. Our soldiers sing on the march, our peasants sing as they work in the fields, the women as they go about their household duties. You are quite wrong in thinking us a gloomy race. Come to Russia some day, and I shall show you these things.

*From a letter to REMI KAINS.*



WHILE the fame of Larrovitch springs from his novels and short stories, he was also a very talented writer of verse. Those of you who have read "Vyvodne" will recall the three little lyrics included among the pages of that novel. The charm of these songs was recognized by a publisher in Paris, who issued them in a separate volume that, now practically unobtainable, is the chief rarity sought after by collectors of the works of Larrovitch.

The poems which I have now the good fortune to bring to your attention, are verses hitherto unknown to the world of letters, and so it may perhaps not be uninteresting to relate the circumstances through which they came into my hands.

Some nine months ago a Russian diplomat of my acquaintance who had, like so many Russian noblemen, decided gambling proclivities, happened to tell me that he was heavily interested in a company whose shares are dealt in on the New York Stock Exchange. As some of the gentlemen now present may have distressing recollections in connection with the spectacular career of these shares, friendly discretion leads me to refrain from mentioning the corporation by name. At any rate, on the day previous to the aforesaid conversation, I had, quite inadvertently (in the locker room of a golf club) overheard the president of the company advise one of his best friends to purchase the stock. This I told in confidence to my Russian acquaintance, who thanked me profusely. A fortnight went by and we met again. In the meantime, the shares had broken violently, and I was about to express my regret to the Russian at the loss in which I had, with the best of intentions, involved him, when, with beaming face and both hands outstretched, he greeted me with the statement that in view of the information I had given him, he had at once sold

## *Feodor Vladimir Larrovitch*

all his shares. As I have said, he was a diplomat.

About half a year went by, and I had almost forgotten the episode, when a letter postmarked Petrograd arrived. "I have not forgotten the good turn you did me shortly before I left New York," he wrote, "and you must not object if I give myself the pleasure of sending you a slight token of appreciation. Knowing your admiration for one of the greatest of my country's authors, I am sending you three manuscript poems by Larrovitch, recently discovered by a bookseller of Petrograd. I am sending with them the English translations that I have myself ventured to make."

It is worth noting, as both the handwriting and the contents make evident, that these three poems, of which I shall read you my paraphrases in verse based on my friend's versions in prose, belong to far separated epochs in the life of Larrovitch. The first is a love song of his pre-nuptial days, having, curiously enough, a prophetic note, however unconscious, inasmuch as the woman that he married was later to elope with a young French officer. It is entitled

### **L Y R I C**

*Dearest, I fling you a rose,  
Red as the blood of my heart.  
Look without. See how it snows;  
How the reckless wind doth dart.  
Cutting and biting he goes.  
Dearest, I fling you a rose.*

*As melt the winter's snows,  
So shall its fragrance depart.  
Drink deep, while love's fountain flows,*

### *Three Incidental Poems of Larrovitch*

*Hand to hand, lips to lips, heart to heart.  
For e'en love dies away, O my rose,  
As melt the winter's snows.*

I need hardly point out that this poem, which is in a general way similar to the love song included in the fourth chapter of "Crasny Baba," belongs to that class of poetry to which writers of many ages, from the Greek anthologists, down through Herrick, to numerous lyricists of our day, have so frequently contributed, and that in its treatment of the philosophy expounded alike by Omar in his "Rubaiyat," and Horace in his "Carpe Diem," it is of a kind that might have as readily come from an English, or an American, as from a Russian pen.

In the next poem, however, (although here, too, is struck the universal note that underlies the philosophy of courage) the local color is Russian and the character of the verses is peculiarly allied with the personal experiences of their author. It will be remembered that during the years 1845-1850 Larrovitch was an exile in Siberia. In the present "Marching Song" he exercises caution, refraining from reference to cruelties imposed upon political exiles, and exemplifies the spirit of bravery in a Siberian theme less familiar to the world at large. In the verses we see a group of men, not sent away in punishment for political offenses, but setting forth (like the companions of Behring in the time of Peter the Great) to discover new lands and seas, to dominate by force of the spirit of man that vast domain of Siberia, which was for Larrovitch, we may readily believe, the symbol of resistance over which the fearless human intellect should yet rise dominant.

Feodor Vladimir Larrovitch  
SIBERIAN MARCHING SONG

*We march along the Moscow road,  
Five score adventurous men.  
The North Lights glitter in our eyes;  
A continent shall be our prize.  
Though cold slays five—twice five!—why then,  
We march along the Moscow road,  
Four score brave men and ten.*

*We march along the Moscow road,  
Four score brave men and ten.  
Tobolsk is passed, Yakutsk is near.  
Hal! ice and snow, think ye we fear?  
Take twice your toll. We pay it. Then  
We march along the Moscow road,  
Four score adventurous men.*

*We march along the Moscow road,  
Four score adventurous men.  
Though crows shall flock to those that die,  
And we gnaw shoe-straps, you and I,  
And famine slays again, again  
We march along the Moscow road,  
A few adventurous men.*

The last of the poems that my Russian friend sent me is entitled "The Exile." Written in blank verse, it comprises lines replete not alone with the melancholy sentiment characteristic of Russian literature, but also with that sadness which old age feels when it contemplates the unfulfilled aspirations of early days. The years of Larrovitch are here approaching their end, and though he still (a new and not uninteresting biographical fact)

### *Three Incidental Poems of Larrovitch*

finds solace in romantic companionship, the poet, in paying tribute to a younger martyr of intellectual idealism, sorrowfully recurs to the dreams and labors of his own valiant youth.

#### THE EXILE

*How sad, O my beloved, how sad to think of the  
springtime departed,  
While the December wind, angrily biting the shutters,  
And spitting forth icicles,  
Howls its discord, loud and drear.*

*But sadder my heart for you, O courageous lad,  
Who must so far away, and for so long a while,  
Never, I fear me, to return.*

*Yet here, clothed in comfortable furs,  
With my beloved nestling at my knees,  
I think of you with reverent envy,  
And leave untasted the wine cup,  
Pondering my own youth.*

George Sidney Hellman



## FIVE

Larrovitch

## LETTERS

THOMAS WALSH

THIS morning I have drained seven glasses of tea and written seven letters. If I could contain more tea, doubtless I would write more letters! A drop of rum in your tea, Ivan Georgevitch, might increase your capacity for correspondence.

*From a letter to I. G. BETENKOFF,  
Larrovitch's publisher.*



IN the compacted space of a few pages it is practically impossible to give adequate representation of the letters of Larrovitch. He was an indefatigable and voluminous correspondent, in fact, during his later years, he devoted more time to correspondence than to the actual pursuit of his literary calling. Living in an age when correspondence was not limited to scrappy lines on a post card, he often let his letters run on to many pages. Some of his finest sentiments and most vivid bits of description can be found in these letters, the five reproduced here are all from the period 1875-1880 and represent his mature thought.

The first is to his good friend Lanatiére. The letter opens with some personal affairs, then continues:

"... I often wonder if readers of books appreciate the great cost a book is to its author—the price in living. Some men exist to live, but an author lives to write. From his observations, his privations, his pleasures, his romances, his adventures he is constantly distilling the pure essence from which is made the fragrant perfume of literature. Not that all men pay this price; a few do, and it is proven in the lasting quality of their work.

"I always advise a young writer to follow these rules: Work less and loaf more; write less and observe more; above all, crowd the day full of experiences, purify and strengthen it with activities, come into your literary manhood greatly, like a noble ship coming into port freighted with all manner of goods from many lands.

"The writing of youth often possesses a singular ecstacy, but its great weakness lies in its immaturity. Youth is too impatient, is not willing to wait until experience and observation settle and formulate. On the other hand, the writing of old age lacks this ecstacy because it waits too long. There is always *the* moment to write, just as there is always *the* moment to take the *peruskies* out of the pan.

"I used the word 'ecstacy.' I like it. And the older I grow the more I believe that its presence is the ultimate test of good writing. Not necessarily an ecstacy of form, but a ra-

## *Feodor Vladimir Larrovitch*

pidity of action, a quickness of perception which comes from being so full of a subject that one writes easily and joyfully, as a fountain gushes. Writing which is based on a thorough knowledge of a subject invariably convinces me. To some men this knowledge is mature scholarship, to others an understanding of men and women and nature. But knowledge of some sort must be there.

"Dear fellow, I did not mean to write at such length, and I could go on writing thus for hours. We authors love to talk about our craft. I think this is well."

The next letter, written en route to the Crimea, was to a Madame Martinoff in reply to her criticism of the character of Katherine Feodorovna in "*Vyvodne*." Katherine Feodorovna is a brilliant woman of elder years who serves as confidant to certain of the younger women in Perm where the story is laid.\* Madame Martinoff, it appears, objected to the cynicism of the character, Larrovitch's reply, written with unquestioned graciousness, nevertheless contains, between the lines, some volleys which, it is to be hoped, did not entirely pass over the head of the good lady at the time.

### **MY DEAR MADAME MARTINOFF:**

"The post has just arrived and I find your letter. Although I would prefer to give your criticism of Katherine Feodorovna more lengthy consideration before replying, the demands on my time—passed mostly on trains and in strange hotels these days—necessitate my answering you immediately.

"You say that women do not speak as cynically as I have made Katherine Feodorovna speak. May I beg to differ with you and offer a correction? What you doubtless meant to say was that hitherto it has not been the fashion for women in novels to speak cynically; it has been the custom to make them utter platitudes—sweet and endearing—which draw the picture of helplessness, indolence and irresponsibility.

\*For a passage in which Katherine Feodorovna figures, see the opening paragraphs of "*The True and False About Larrovitch*," p. 77.



# *The Larrovitch Centenary Celebration*

*1817—1917*

---

*The forthcoming definitive edition of the works of Larrovitch, to be published as a centenary tribute, will be hailed with joy by all lovers of Russia's novelist, patriot and philosopher. Surely, it is a sign of the re-awakening of Russia that the voice of this great author should speak again in this hour of the nation's fight for world liberty. Russkoe Slovo, December 12, 1916*

*From out the land of sunrise, dispelling the murk of evil report, rises the figure of Larrovitch . . . to whom the world will some day pay just tribute.*

*James Trotter in The London Times*

*Plusieurs, sans doute, ont défini l'âme Russe, mais il n'est aucun qui l'ait analysée aussi clairement dans tous ses attributs que Téodor Vladimír Larrovitch.*

*Marcel Lanatière*

---

## *The Authors Club*

*April the Twenty-sixth  
Nineteen Seventeen*

*First page of the program of the Larrovitch Centenary Celebration, with Lanatière's famous quotation*

## Five Larrovitch Letters

"Do women think cynical thoughts? That I cannot answer. But that they speak them I can most assuredly vouch for. Surely their cynicism is not altogether thoughtless! Does it not follow, then, that they are capable of cynicism, and if capable should be so pictured?

"For remember, my dear madame, the function of the novelist is not to portray life as it should exist or as he might wish it to exist, but as it does exist. I am an uncompromising realist; I can follow no other canon in writing save the truth.

"Katherine Feodorovna is a woman who has lived life to the full, as you doubtless have observed. She has seen the grim tragedy behind the smirk and pose of society. She has known loveless love—for such there can be—and has lived for appearances alone. At the time she enters "Vyvodne" she is a quick perceptor of fallacies in other women—she sees beyond their paint and puffs, she can discern between real joy and false and can sense the dissembler on sight . . . I like Katherine Feodorovna. She is one of my favorite characters. She is the type of woman I doubtless would have become had it not been the will of an all-knowing Providence to make me a man."

Turning now from the "literary" type of letter, we have a descriptive note in the next. It was written to a friend in St. Petersburg who had asked Larrovitch what he remembered of the first Siberian village where he began his exile term. Only a portion of this letter can be given. Note that Larrovitch wrote this almost fifty years after he left Baikalskaia.

" . . . In winter a leper land, an outcast land; in summer it is a busy valley between abundant hills. But winter or summer, life there was fast and furious and free. Champagne—men made rich in the hinterland gold fields or the illicit vodka traffic with the Chinese across the border fifty versts southward—*brodjai*\*—one or two French demimondaines—wild Cossack officers and their wilder commands—these colored

\*Escaped criminal exiles who went about robbing the countryside. To this day the *brodjai* are a serious menace in Transbaikalia.

## *Feodor Vladimir Larrovitch*

the half-Russian, half-Oriental life of the town.

"A narrow strip of log houses and shops, Baikalskiaia sprawled a mile length along the low banks of the great inland sea. To the north of the town stood a flour mill and many barracks and army store sheds. There was one school house and a church, a Chinese bazaar and an omnipresence of mud and dust.

"In winter the wicked clotted there and the troops were ordered back to town. There was room for 5,000 troops, all Cossacks, who every night and morning loudly proclaimed—to our disgust and discomfort—that their souls were God's and their bodies the Tsar's. The latter I never questioned, but, from what I saw of these fellows, I did not envy God his enforced possession.

"Mid-October used to see the first ice crusting the water. The hills would turn red and gold, and then dun. Here and there the white nakedness of a silver birch that looked in the moonlight like an unsheathed sword. By November camel caravans would cross the frozen Baikal coming north from out Mongolia way with loads of tea and marmot skins.

"In Baikalskiaia I lived the first two years of my exile. The second spring I was transferred to Irkutsk . . . But I shall not bore you with telling of Irkutsk."

The next letter was written shortly before Larrovitch's death and was in answer to a correspondent who had attacked the Church. It evidences the scholarship and deep thought for which Larrovitch was famous, and has indications of his return to the Orthodox viewpoint.

DEAR IVAN ADLER:

"I cannot agree with you. Perhaps at one time in my life I would have concurred with your conclusions, but now, after these many years, these many wanderings, I have come to look on the matter in a different light. I believe our greatest heroes in Russia are our soldiers and our saints, and of the two the saint is the nobler.

"The spiritual leader is the unseen Captain of State. Always his figure emerges after the smoke of battle and the clouded hate of men have drifted away.

## *Five Larrovitch Letters*

"The vigor and immortality of a saint lies in the fact that he epitomizes the maximum strength of a people's moral courage. If you would understand the calibre of a nation's moral courage, my dear Adler, and trace its spiritual development—its fierce encounters, its tedious march to the light, its heights and its depths—you must understand its saints.

"St. Francis of Assisi marked a definite stage in the development of the Italian genus. His influence has penetrated clear through generations. In the same measure have the spirits of St. Louis and Joan of Arc marked high tides in the French soul. Did I not hear folk speak of them constantly when I was in France? And why? Why the immortality of these men and women? Because the saint typifies that which none other can—the spirit of courage, the spirit of long endurance.

"Now what their saints are to the Italian and French and Briton and Teuton, so are they to us. Only to us they are even more, for our saints are the very rock on which our vast empire and its future are based.

"Do not think this the cryptic saying of an old man. Let me explain.

"We Russians have many saints, for it is given to us especially (I say this in all humility) to recognize, when we see them, those who may enter in through the gates into the City. To be sure, their vogue rises and falls, some are forgotten, some revived. Those who survive the vagaries of Time—mark this!—are the men who helped shape Russian destinies by moulding our national soul into something entirely different from that of any other people. They have invariably been of two classes—soldiers or monks: men of the type of Alexander Nevski who stemmed the tide of the great invasion and with rare diplomacy turned Tatar vassalage into Muscovite independence, or men such as the monk Sergius who, a century later, labored to revitalize the national soul into a spirit strong, noble, and abiding.

"In any nation the standard of a people's moral force is more truly reflected in the lives of its saints than its warriors. The warrior leader often disregards moral law when the grim necessities of war assert themselves. In the saint is crystal-

## Feodor Vladimir Larrovitch

lized that spiritual force which is the very foundation of law and political structure. The expedient standard of the warrior may "work," as we use the term, but the idealistic standard of the saint endures.

"But mark this one great fact—the warrior who has saved a nation soon ceases to be a warrior and becomes a saint, his helmet takes on the adumbration of a halo. He becomes a saviour of our Russian soul—our national soul, just as the religious saved our spiritual genus."

It is fitting that the last letter in our selection should be to a child, for Larrovitch was fond of children and whenever one crept into a novel he always seemed to have so much fun playing with him. This letter was to the little son of an obscure *ispravnik* or local police chief, in Ufa who had sent Larrovitch a box made of plaited birch bark, in return for which Larrovitch sent him a toy sword made of Circassian walnut.

"What do you think happened to me today, Mikail Ivanovitch?

"I was walking through a wood where the trees were very thick and tall, and I heard a voice behind me, calling and calling.

"Who called me? I shouted.

"At first I did not hear a sound.

"Then, from the hollow of a tree stepped out a fairy. He was a very beautiful fairy, with green and blue boots and a bright red shirt and a yellow cap on his head.

"Well, young man I asked him. What can I do for you?

"Please, sir, said he, I know of a little boy and the little boy's name is Mikail Ivanovitch and the little boy lives in Ufa, and this little boy, sir, wants more than anything else to have a . . . And with that he climbed up on my shoulder and whispered in my ear.

"Now wasn't that funny, Mikail Ivanovitch? Wasn't it funny that just at the same time I was walking in the wood and met that fairy, you were thinking of me and sending me the beautiful box of plaited birch bark! And while you were

## *Five Larrovitch Letters*

sending me the box, I was down in a shop buying you this very thing the fairy told me you wanted so much!

“Give your Mamma and Papa each a kiss for me and remember always *your loving friend*,”

FEODOR VLADIMIR LARROVITCH.

*Thomas Walsh*



---

THE TRUE AND THE FALSE ABOUT

*Larrovitch*

••• RICHARDSON WRIGHT

“BUT I am not quite sure that I understand women,” remarked Andrew. “When you do, my lad,” said his father, “you will know entirely too much to associate with ordinary mortals. After women, the stars.”

*From “VYVODNE.”*



[The scene\* is the drawing room in the palace of the governor general of Perm. A Louis XVI. room, with a superfluity of gilt. Tea has been served and the two women fall to talking. The one is Katherine Feodorovna, a dowager of the upper '50's, socially prominent and confidant to certain of the younger women. The other is Tatiana Verovna, the young wife of the Governor-General. His Excellency is much older than Tatiana, which, in the conversation that preceded, has been quoted by her as justification for a mild indiscretion committed one evening a week previous with a certain dashing captain of a lanciers regiment in barracks at Perm, gossip of which appears to have filtered through the town.]

"I REALLY do not think it matters what Nina is saying," remarked Katherine Feodorovna.

"If it were only Nina I would not worry," replied Tatiana Verovna. "Nina? Pooh! But its everyone else. Oh, I can tell. The butcher, the baker, the wine merchant, Mensikoff, Baratkin and all the rest seem to know about it."

"But do you permit that to worry you, what the small trades-people think and the Mensikoffs and the Baratkins? Baratkin's wife was always a gossip anyhow." The older woman looked over at Titiana Verovna who was sitting dejectedly on the edge of the couch across the room with that imperious scorn which alone is bred of hard contact with a merciless world. "Listen to me, child. I speak from fifty years of good report and evil report. Once you lay yourself open to criticism, once your name is connected with a scandal or even a romance, the world and his wife thenceforth considers your life public property and your reputation is what

\*This scene is in chapter 21 of "Dvornik." I give these few introductory notes so that the reader can catch the drift of the dialogue.

## *Feodor Vladimir Larrovitch*

they care to make it. You must pay that price for being the wife of the governor-general. Had you married a nonentity no one would mention your name! Oh dear! I have lived through so much talk, and survived it all, fortunately, that I laugh at your little problems." Katherine Feodorovna leaned forward in her chair. "Now be honest with me, child. Which would you rather be: a nonentity and not talked about, or a public social figure and the topic of gossip for every tongue-wagger in the province?"

Tatiana Verovna smiled through her tears.

"Because you must make the choice," Katherine Feodorovna continued. "They'll talk about you whether it is the cut of your gown or your choice in amours."

"But I did nothing wrong," protested Tatiana Verovna.

"That's just the paradox of gossip," replied Katherine Feodorovna. "If you sin, you might just as well shatter the entire ten commandments, because the public will do it for you anyhow."

HERE is almost a note of cynicism in this scene, and I am not sure but that Larrovitch was very much in earnest when he wrote it. Like many another man in the public eye he suffered the gossip of scandal-mongers. Motives of the utmost purity were twisted about for public delectation, and the various occasions when, unwillingly and unwittingly often, his life impinged on romance and adventure, he was made to bear the major share of the blame. Granted that all novels are, to a greater or less degree, autobiographical, we can assume that in the scene quoted above Larrovitch was merely putting on the lips of Katherine Feodorovna his own





*The room in which Larrovitch died. When the photograph was taken the house was occupied by a poor family and was sadly in need of repairs*

## *The True and the False About Larrovitch*

sentiments regarding what the people thought of him. For although he smarted under the criticism of his work, he had an undisguised weakness for otherwise being the topic of conversation. This weakness led to many false things being said of him and many true. I am endeavoring here to put each in its proper category.

Shortly after he was exiled to Siberia, as is well known, Larrovitch's wife eloped with a young French lieutenant. This is the fact: Larrovitch never saw her again. But witness how gossip garbles the story, how it makes out of the whole cloth a tale which never was played by either Larrovitch or his wife! How does it run? Thus—One night, in the summer of 1866, when Larrovitch was in Paris he stopped to rest for a few moments on a bench in the Bois. In the act of lighting a cigarette, the glow from it lighted up the face of a woman on the other end of the bench. It was the runaway wife, now an outcast, one of the commercially amorous of that great city "where joy is trafficked in."

The absurdity of this story is readily appreciated when we recall that Lanatiére unearthed the record of her burial in November, 1846, a little over a year after her elopement. He says:

*"C'est dans un petit cimetière obscur et presqu' inconnu, aux Batignolles, que j'ai découvert sa tombe, parmi d'autres de ses compatriotes décédés à Paris. Elle était surmontée de la croix Grecque à trois bras, et inscrite, en caractères Russes:*

CI-GIT

SONIA SIROTOVNA LARROVITCH

NÉE Á ODESSA, LE 20 JANVIER, 1820.

MORTE Á PARIS, LE 10 NOVEMBRE, 1846.

*"Dans une vie brève, elle accomplit merveilles."*

## *Feodor Vladimir Larrovitch*

Footprints of the exiles are to be found all over Siberia. Due to the devoted labor of scholarly men who have been sent there during the last 400 years, this great Asiatic province owes some of its remarkable development. So it has come about that one finds the name of Larrovitch connected with the beginnings of the Alexandroff Museum at Irkutsk. He is reputed to have been one of a band of intellectuals in exile there who started the collection of geological and ethnological specimens for which that museum is locally famous.

In Irkutsk they also tell of Larrovitch being a member of a local volunteer fire brigade. This is plausible enough, for shortly before Larrovitch reached Irkutsk the city was visited by a devastating fire that wiped out most of the buildings along the Bolshaia. The portrait showing him as a young man is taken from a group of that fire company painted at the time by an artist also in exile.

It was characteristic of Larrovitch that he should take such a lively interest in community affairs. If further substantiation is desired, one can find it reflected in the tale, "The Witless Leader" in "Crasny Baba," in which the fire chief runs his water wagons to the river, fills them up, and rumbles back to the fire only to find the water all gone: he had forgotten to place the corks in the bung holes!

The combination of exile and desertion hardened Larrovitch for a time, but it was only a callus that protected a warm and kindly heart. Today Russians in speaking of him will offset tales of his excesses by quoting stories of his generosity. He was very fond of children. There are many child characters in his books, notably little *Serge Ivanovitch*, the concierge's son in "Barin! Barin!"

## *The True and the False About Larrovitch*

And was it not a child, the curly-locked *Daria*, who moved the unruly mob to repentance in "Gospodi Pomi?"

Larrovitch was also very fond of animals, dogs especially. This is not to be wondered at, for it is among the paradoxes of Russia that the same government which wielded the knout forbade trained animal shows because they necessitated cruelty to the animals! The fondness is also reflected in the various stories. There was *Chort\**, the half-wolf cur dog of the old peasant *Gutsitin* in "Ivan Soronko," and the faithful borzoi in "Swept and Gar-nished," likewise the vivid scene in "Vyvodne" in which *Sonia* and *Ivan* hunt rabbits with dachshunds, a favorite sport to this day in some parts of Russia.

As we are here concerned with the weakness of Larrovitch as well as his masterful characteristics, we are obliged to consider two more types of tales about him: his drinking and his superstitions.

In his paper, Dr. Coan has already touched on Larrovitch's occasional recourse to crystal gazing. By birth and breeding a man of questioning turn of mind, Larrovitch ran the gamut of faiths and infatuations. If at times he did not appear to believe in God, it was because he was believing in something else. He can never be accused of sterile agnosticism. He had a flare for astrology at one time, at another he investigated spiritualism, at still another he tried his hand at mysticism, which failed him for the simple reason that mysticism is something one cannot experiment with or dabble in. "All mystics speak the same language" said the saint, "for all come from the same country." Larrovitch was not

\*The nearest equivalent in the Muscovite parlance to our everyday "damn." *Chort Vasmi* can be roughly translated, "The Devil take it!" As shown by this, Larrovitch had an unquenchable sense of humor.

## *Feodor Vladimir Larrovitch*

from that land, and hence the tongue of the mystics was unintelligible to him.

In his last years he made concessions to Orthodoxy, as can be seen in his final novel "Gospodi Pomi," and I believe that he died in the odor of ecclesiasticism, receiving at the end the ministrations of a priest. He was buried by the Church, and over his grave shines the three-armed cross of Orthodoxy.

Do not think it an anti-climax that I choose as the final topic Larrovitch and Bacchus. One of the worst things that can befall an author after his death is to be deified. Robert Louis Stevenson has been robbed of all manhood and virility by being made out a little literary god. Stevenson was a very human chap with very human weaknesses. So was Larrovitch. He was a four-squared man, an athlete, a man who did not live by halves. Life poured out for him a full cup—and he drank it to the very lees.

What does it mean to us, after these many years, that Lanatiére saved him from freezing to death when he found him one bitterly cold night in a stupor on the Rue de Rivoli after a protracted drinking bout?

Does it make us think any the less of the man that he drank his carafe of vodka every night before dinner, or that he had a passion for the fine wines of the Crimea, or that he was wont to disappear for a fortnight to fight out the game with life over the cups?

There are things in Larrovitch's career which prove fat carrion for ghoulish pens to batten on. There are men who speak of him as though to say "Here's a good yarn about Larrovitch. If it isn't true it ought to be." On the other hand I am not endeavoring to pose as an apologist and set up the image of a plaster saint for you

*The True and the False About Larrovitch*

to think of as Feodor Vladimir Larrovitch. Never! The good and the evil were mingled in him. He was neither viciously bad nor insufferably virtuous.

*Richardson Wright*



---

TALKS WITH.

*Larrovitch*

••• TITUS MUNSON COAN

"I AM a Slavophile because I believe in the ultimate destiny of my country." General Shertovitch drew himself up to his full height and glared over at Bachmann.

"No. You fear us. That's why you're a Slavophile."

"All right, put it that way, if you will. No fate more terrible can befall a nation than that it become saturated with your damnable materialism. And let me tell you, Bachmann, the day will come when the entire world shall revolt against it. You may set up your Teuton god in every corner of the universe, but you will never be able to make the people worship it."

*From "GOSPODI POMI."*



YES, I knew him well; and how vivid, after these fifty years, are my recollections! Not only of his words but of his voice, his smile, the flash of his eye, his gestures, as he spoke. Mine is not the skill of an Eckermann, a Lockhart, a Boswell; but if I can give any adequate impression of that great personality I shall be content.

It was at Paris in 1867 that I met the man who was to count for so much in my intellectual life. I saw him frequently; sometimes at the Russian Embassy, sometimes at the home of the United States Minister to France, Larrovitch's exact contemporary. Never was warmer welcome than that of this urbane and distinguished American to the intellectuals of whatever land. Among our countrymen who frequented his salon were Robert Dale Owen, Moncure Conway, Freeman Clarke of Boston, O. B. Frothingham, Edward E. Hale and others of the advanced Unitarian cult. Dr. Evans occasionally bustled in—Evans, the friend and confidant of royalty, the most famous dentist in Europe. "More crowned heads have opened their mouths to me," he used to say, "than to anyone else in Christendom."

The younger men were often to be seen at these receptions; well do I remember Clarence King, the geologist, most brilliant of talkers, and the lamented Hooper, both of the highest promise. Was I, too, a youth of promise? Presumably; how else could I have won Larrovitch's friendship—I may almost say his intimacy? There was no resisting his charm. Neither his political nor his domestic trials—and they were as bitter as those of Socrates—had soured him. Like Emerson and other sages he welcomed the friendship of young men; they would hand down his personal tradition. His talk was entralling, and whether I believed or doubted, I was an eager listener. His thoughts, his emotions were tides that lifted you, yet did not submerge. My surrender to

## *Feodor Vladimir Larrovitch*

him was immediate. I could have said of him what Wieland said after his first meeting with Goethe, "Since that day my soul has been as full of him as the dewdrop of the morning sun."

Larrovitch was then in his fiftieth year. His strength was still unimpaired; there was no shadow of turning. There were great reserves of vigor in him. "If in my youth," he said, "I committed some excesses, they were not excesses for me." Yet his régime was of the golden mean. "Work and pleasure, religion and revelry, are better in moderation," he said, "and for mental sanity, abjure all metaphysics and all creeds."

He was powerfully built and tall—five feet and eleven inches. "More than that is inconvenient; less is a disadvantage." His complexion was tawny, but his eyes were sparkling blue. When I knew him he wore his hair long; his features were square cut and strongly marked, and in his serious moods they reminded one of Albrecht Dürer's portrait of himself. The tips of his ears were slightly folded downwards—a reversion to the type of some faunal or other prick-eared ancestor. I never saw another instance of Darwin's tubercle, but it is not infrequent. Tinnitus, in his monograph on "the Domestic Uses of the Megaphone," mentions its occurrence among his own children, perhaps as a protective device. The only portrait that shows the crumpled ear is the masterly sketch by Chalkoff now in the Musée Roumiantzeff. There is a fairly good portrait in the tope of Prince Nogo at Nagasaki, but it is not seen save by his friends and now and then a foreign guest; for the Prince keeps to the exclusive ways of the old régime; like Papegaut in Rabelais, "il par nature est a veoir un peu difficile." Mr. Wright, himself a Russian scholar and traveler and

## *Talks with Larrovitch*

student of Larrovitch's career, has come upon several engraved likenesses, so called, of the great man in his declining years. They are interesting but they are misleading; the form is there but the light has gone. Unless further search should be successful, Larrovitch must share the mischance of Columbus and Shakespere, of whom we have no convincing portraits.

But what need of portrait or semblance have I, who had the intimacy of his features? There needs no crystal ball or magic mirror to renew the vision; that noble countenance rises before me as I write.

It was in the year of the great Exposition, during July and August; I was much in his company. We strolled in Fontainebleau forest, we drove in the Bois, we met at the Louvre and at the Embassy. Sometimes we boarded the *bateau mouche* and went down stream to the farthest landing-place, returning late at night; then homeward bound through the Place Vendôme and the Rue Rivoli, rapt in talk, we would pass unawares by his hotel, the Meurice; returning, we would pass and repass again, like a ship oversailing her anchorage or a spent pendulum coming to rest. So in other years and with other philosophers I have gone astray; sometimes in New York City with Moncure Conway of beloved memory—Conway, pilgrim to the farthest East, who, returning, brought back something of the Indian magic in his scrip. Or perhaps one watch of the night was held with Stephen Pearl Andrews, the self-styled "Pantarch," master of philosophies and himself author of an elaborate system which was to include and harmonize all others: "Universology," he called it. Universology was to explain all things and reconcile all contradictions, even those between organic chemistry and the doctrine of trans-

## Feodor Vladimir Larrovitch

substantiation. He was well equipped, his talk was eloquent and very discursive—*de omnibus rebus et quibusdam aliis*. But I wander.

To return to Larrovitch: the story of his first love was the last confidence he gave me. Shortly before we parted he spoke briefly of it, and as it seemed to me with a certain reluctance, almost with timidity, as if fearing that I might not feel the beauty of the experience. As with Goethe and many another lad, the awakening came to him at the age of fourteen, the beloved one being three years older. Abila Baldinoff was a visitor at Kiev; a delicate blonde with a Greek profile, the eldest daughter of a Courland pastor—a girl of quiet ways, and not a coquette; but she had musical talent, she sang Russian folk songs well and she was beautiful. It was love at first sight, and for Larrovitch the stars and the sunrising. “For me,” he said, “the new emotion was more than a rapture, it was a wonder and a wild surprise. I could not understand it. Had other people felt the same? I had never dreamed of anything like it; it was a new life. I did not know a line of Dante, but I followed the footing of his feet. Least of all could I have guessed at this radiant experience from what I saw around me. How weary were the husbands’ faces, and how grave the wives’! Everywhere the sombre domestic countenance; I took it as a matter of course that sadness was the natural lot of marriage. Whence came the great joy that had befallen me?

“I was still very innocent in thought and feeling—not indeed wholly ignorant, but when sex-feeling arose I tried to repress it—not always successfully. I thought it degrading: it did not seem to have any kinship with my transfiguring emotion. It was a mystery; who could





*The grave of Larrovitch. A small shrine has been erected over his grave stone. The stone itself forms part of the flooring of this shrine. Above it is suspended a lamp which the monks in a nearby monastery keep constantly burning*

## *Talks with Larrovitch*

explain it? I never said a word of love to Abila, but she must have known. My beatitude was not for long. Abila returned to her home. I saw her but once again and that very briefly; but for a full year the thought of her was never absent during my waking hours, and to-day I have no dearer remembrance."

Then came his college days. Larrovitch liked to speak of them. The delicate boy was now a sturdy youth. "At the University of Kiev," he said, "I gave some part of my time to the prescribed studies, enough to stand fairly well in my classes; but this was by way of concession, for my chief pleasure was in athletics and military exercises. In these I won some distinction, and it seems that the tradition lingers. Read this . . .", and he gave me a copy of the *London Times*, just in by mail.

I took the paper and read as follows: "Our old readers will remember Larrovitch of Kiev, now Count Larrovitch, poet, novelist and diplomat, who after some years of travel in Europe has recently come to Paris upon an important mission. We reprint an account of his student life as given some years ago by our Russian correspondent.

"Young Larrovitch is just now the most admired figure in our college life; not so much for his scholarship as for his astonishing proficiency in athletics and virile exercises. He carries everything before him. He practised wrestling with Stranene and Pushkin, a sturdy son of the poet; in pugilism his teacher was Beanoff, once Master of Janissaries to the Sublime Porte. From Scruffsky and Shindekoff he learned the last refinements of the jujutsu, until then too little known in Russia—the strangle-hold, the head-lock, the squealing grip and the cross-buttock. He studied the broadsword with

## *Feodor Vladimir Larrovitch*

Hedzoff and attained great skill; there was no parrying his tierce. 'I shall avoid having any quarrel with you,' said Hedzoff after the fourth lesson. In a word, Larrovitch is the pride of the University. We shall hear more of this formidable young man.'"

I returned the journal to Larrovitch. "That was before the era of boxing," he said. "Yes, those were great days and famous masters. They did not want to give me up, for I was of the best promise. One day Beanoff said, not without deference, 'Permit me to advise you. What is the good of all your books? Pray leave off those useless studies. They bring you nowhere. Let me give you six months of hard training and I will make you the champion heavyweight of Western Russia.' I was flattered; here was a career! But I had to decline. My fighting was to be done with tongue and pen."

And for this Larrovitch was well equipped. He had what in a Russian is no unusual accomplishment, a working knowledge of five modern languages. The chapter of physical culture came to an end with Larrovitch's college days, but mentally, as well as physically, he was now an athlete prepared to face the world.

And now the fuller tides were rising. In 1840 came the episode of *Vera Katinka*, the beautiful Circassian, the story so admirably told in "Crasny Baba." "The critics called it romance," he said. "Well, I put masks on some of my people; but I did not have to invent them." In private circles the fact of that liaison was well known, and for the privileged ones it was the sensation of the day. But the story did not get into print; the biographers make no record of it. What caused the suppression? It was due to political and social influence; for *Vera Katinka* belonged to a family of high position,

## *Talks with Larrovitch*

and Larrovitch was already showing a strong hand in the game of politics. But the Russian censorship, then as under the last imperial régime, while it was very strict as regarded political affairs, did not gravely concern itself with the proprieties. "One's amours," said Larrovitch, "are more interesting than one's marriages; and we Russians write with great freedom on matters of sex. For all our faults, and they are many, we are no Pharisees; in plain speaking we are brothers of the French. But it is they that suffer the penalties of frankness, for everybody reads French novels, and to foreigners generally the naughtiest are the most welcome; more perhaps to the Englishman than to others, for they are pleasures under the ban. He reads with delight, he closes the book with reluctance. But now his spiritual ballast has shifted; he finds himself troubled, an official wrinkle gathers on his brow. He recalls himself, snatches up a pen and writes to *The Times* announcing the decadence of the Latin races, and wondering how a Frenchman ever came to found the Montyon prize for virtue."

There are communities without religion, but there are none without scandals, even among the elect; and in the literary circles of London Larrovitch had heard one that was unknown as yet to the public and was to remain unknown for yet many years, but to be disclosed at last as one of the greatest surprises in biography—the early love-affair of William Wordsworth and Annlette Vallon. "A very interesting amour," said he; "and quite characteristic. Wordsworth's passions were as strong as those of any other young poet or *prosateur*. His readers and critics thought him cold; they could not have been more completely mistaken. Wordsworth misled them by his purposed avoidance of amatory

## Feodor Vladimir Larrovitch

themes; he tells us that if he had used them, he would have been tempted to write with too much warmth. This youthful amour gave him warning. What a fortunate thing that it has been kept out of print! It would never do to scandalize the British public—the public that to this day has found no niche in Westminster Abbey for the name of Byron.” He paused, then said: “However, we need not blame the British too severely; so they are born and bred. *Tout comprendre c'est tout pardonner.*”

Larrovitch spoke often of the famous men and women he had met; but his favorite themes were those of research and travel and American affairs, for he had come to know our country well. In his earlier writings, as Mr. Sykes has shown so clearly, his trend was toward metaphysical studies, but in later years he came over to the camp of science; like William Godwin, he “left off his first opinions with his youth.” He rejected the old ontologies; he put Kant and Hegel on the shelf; he would not discuss final causes or the *Ding an sich*. “All those questions,” he said, “are forever beyond the reach of our faculties; we can never understand the ultimate constitution of things. As well try to make the moon’s libration comprehensible to a chanting tomcat.”

But Larrovitch knew to its limits the domain of valid speculative thought. Space he considered as relative, not absolute; matter, whatever it may be, as infinitely divisible. He was at home with the molecule, but he denied the atom. “The word contradicts itself,” he would say; “you cannot conceive of anything so small as not to be further divisible. We must admit infinite minitude as well as magnitude. But why is it harder to conceive the infinitely small than the infinitely great?

## *Talks with Larrovitch*

I have not seen the question answered. Is it not because the subdivision to infinity is imagined as existing within a finite space?"

Metaphysics, once his favorite domain, at last fell entirely out of favor with our philosopher; he came to call it "the phantom science." He knew all the metaphysicians from Plato to Fichte, he had even read Schelling's great work on the Inconceivable; at Jena he had followed the courses of Krakowitz, Nebelskopf, and Mistichenko, the favorite pupil of Hegel, "the one man that understood him." But he turned away from all of them. "Their doctrines are futile," he said. "They have no foundation in observed fact. I never could determine which one of those teachers builded on the cloudiest corner-stone. Your Categories, your Eternal Forms, your Innate Ideas, your Insight of Reason, all are fatuous—yes, worse than fatuous, they are misleading; they are marsh-lights. Why, one of your American philosophers has put it all in a definition;" and he quoted from Stallo's "Modern Physics:"

"Metaphysical thinking is an attempt to deduce the true nature of things from our concepts of them . . . mere figments of the intellect . . . The metaphysical malady seems to be one of the unavoidable disorders of intellectual infancy." Larrovitch added: "Don't confound psychology with metaphysics, as some of your American writers do."

I am sure I need not ask pardon for touching on the scientific phases of Larrovitch's development. Like Goethe, he was great both as a thinker and a poet; in him there was no conflict between the emotional and the intellectual domains. He came to take the most advanced views in biological science; his novels indeed are

## *Feodor Vladimir Larrovitch*

studies in psychology, made in the light of the then recent discoveries of brain-functions. He denied the existence of "mind" except as a function of "matter." "Why attempt to distinguish between the two," he would say, "in view of our present knowledge? Why, it is but yesterday, and here in Paris, that Paul Broca showed that the power of speech resides in a certain limited region of the gray matter of the brain. When that is injured or destroyed the corresponding faculty of 'mind' goes with it. Now at last we know what has long been suspected—that thought is a secretion of the brain. Nor until now has any philosopher, however great his genius, had any right to an opinion on the nature of 'mind'; for nobody heretofore, from Aristotle to Victor Cousin, has had the proven data for an opinion. I call Broca the greatest discoverer since Newton. And this is but the beginning."

What would Larrovitch have said if he could have foreseen the localization of each mental faculty in a definite region of the brain, and the consequent denial by science of mind or soul as a separate entity? But we must not linger on these matters of research. I mention them as showing the range of that intellect as yet too little understood by those who have known Larrovitch only as novelist or poet. He was a dreamer, as we have seen; and a scientific discovery may begin as with a dream; but his sense for the fact put him on guard against visionary philosophies of any kind.

One evening at his rooms, after discoursing on Hegel's idealism, he spoke of New England. "I read Emerson, I tried to read Alcott, whom Emerson called the greatest thinker since Plato. Alcott was the most amiable of men, but his countenance made me think of the full moon in a faint haze. I was interested, elevated, edified—but not

## *Talks with Larrovitch*

instructed. These men had fine feeling, but not the faintest glimmer of science. What need had they of it? They had intuitions, 'intimations.' Your trancendentalist is a poet who mistakes himself for a philospher. His very existence is in figures of speech; for him a fine metaphor is a revelation, a new trope eternal truth. He closes his 'Phaedo,' he emerges from the closet, his face shines; now for the great disclosure! But no, a beautiful phrase is all he brings you.

"Do not linger long in that domain; it is a fair walled garden, and its walks are pleasant, but they are overblown with poppies, and it will be hard for you to find the sally-port . . . It is a relaxing philosophy; it weakens the will to be and to do. It may be well to hitch your wagon to a star, but what transcendentalist ever discovered a planet, or wrote a great poem? For women too these stellar ideals have their danger. Where shall the dreaming maiden find the heroic partner? Not in Plymouth or in Podunk; nowhere nearer, perhaps than on the far side of the moon. Ralph Waldo Emerson's writings have reduced the birthrate in New England."

Larrovitch's scientific studies had not impaired his poetic temperament, for however one's career may chance to be developed, one's original temperament is a thing which does not change. But those studies had spoiled his earlier faith. He had come well through the "theological" and "metaphysical" stages of Comte and now he had small tolerance for the mystic and the so-called supranatural. He said to me one evening, "I am clean done with all that—from the Delphic oracles to the rappings and tappings and 'controls' of today's spiritualism. I have one formula for it all—nine-tenths fraud and one-tenth hypnotism. If I could find any

## *Feodor Vladimir Larrovitch*

clear proof in its favor, it would be an intellectual excitement of the first order, and as such very welcome. But proof is not as yet, and meanwhile all that science has to say is flat against it."

"But," said I, "there are eminent men of science to-day who believe in spiritualism."

"Precisely, and just so did the wise men of the East, every soul of them, believe that the sun went round the earth; and just so today there are men, otherwise intelligent, who believe that the earth is flat. There is always a minority report on creation."

For all his science, however, Larrovitch had some foibles that seemed second-cousin to superstition. He liked to see the new moon over the right shoulder; he tapped on wood occasionally, and from time to time he indulged in crystal-gazing. Did the scrying sphere stand for him as an icon? I never knew, I could not venture to ask him; but some residual traits of his Tatar ancestry lingered in him; and his foibles, if foibles they were, were almost endearing; for Larrovitch was not always too wise or good, as some other great men have been or seemed to be; and now for the first time his temperamental love of beauty, repressed during his early days of hardship, had found its opportunity. Thanks to the brilliant fortunes of his later years, every luxury was now at his command. To some extent, however, his tastes in art remained Oriental; he liked the Byzantine painters, he cared little for Gothic architecture; for him, art had blown her perfect bubbles in the painted domes of Moscow.

Larrovitch was the last of men to make any parade of fortune; but in one matter he had indulged his caprice to such an extreme that a true account of it may seem

## *Talks with Larrovitch*

fantastic. I describe what I saw. Larrovitch's crystal sphere stood in a bay window opening eastward upon a walled garden. It was locked up in a glazed cabinet of Indian sandalwood, of which the side panels bore embossed inscriptions from the Sanhita Veda, with figures carved by a native sculptor of Coromandel. The sphere itself was of unbelievable size, the largest ever mined in the Bernese Oberland, and of the purest water; so limpid was the great crystal that you looked for it to dissolve and flow; but no—it shone steadily and with a soft light, as of Saturn within his rings. Three years' labor by an old craftsman of the Bungelhorn had wrought it into perfect roundness; and it was mounted in a flat hoop of Ceylon ebony enforced with ribs of hammered gold. I have made a study of divination-spheres, I have gazed into many; this was much the largest and finest of all.\*

How frequently Larrovitch used the crystal sphere I do not know. I shall not forget the one occasion on which I saw him consult it. He had brought me home with him after a tiresome reception at the Russian Embassy; the conversation had turned upon the United States—their immense prosperity, their fortunate isolation, their assurance of peace with all the world. "Statesmen's patter, women's chatter," said he; "all very foolish." He was silent for a few minutes; then going to the sandalwood cabinet, he unlocked the door and gazed into the white crystal. Another silence; then he said, "I see great war unloosed—raging above the clouds, and under the earth, and under the seas; and the air made a beaten highway, and human speech borne through the ether to the farthest planet. And what is this? Over

\*Its diameter was 30 centimetres; I made a careful measurement with the Munchausen callipers.

## *Feodor Vladimir Larrovitch*

your own land a great shadow, and the shining of arms in it—your young men going forth to battle, your maidens weeping; and divided counsels among your elders, and flames lighted by many traitors; and sobbing states-women in the halls where your laws are made . . . I can see no more; but there is light on the far horizon."

He closed the cabinet and came away. For a little time the crystal ball shone faintly—not now as within the golden rings of a planet, but as with the light of Mars.

Our next meeting was our last. I was about returning to the States, and called on him to say good-bye. Once more he turned the talk upon our country. "You in America," he said, "like all the rest of the world, have still before you the great conflict, nowhere yet determined, hardly even approaching determination, whether between the stronger and the weaker, the richer and the poorer, the majority and the minority, democracy and military autocracy. Nor would the triumph of either make for good. The majority has not the intelligence for choosing leaders; wastefulness, corruption and democracy give us the tyranny of mob law. On the other hand military or aristocratic rule, however honest or efficient it may be, is selfish and cruel. The ideal government would be that of a wise and humane minority, or of a single autocrat even, could the right one be found; but that cannot be until the majority have won more intelligence and the minority a much higher ethical culture. The geological epochs arrive in time, and so will good government, but it will be long yet. You in the States took one good forward step when you abolished slavery. But consider your abiding race-hatreds, your cruel prejudices of color, your hard treatment of the





*Some relics of Larrovitch—his shirt, icon, pen, ink pot and the padlock from the door of his house. The shirt is a remarkable example of Russian embroidery*

## *Talks with Larrovitch*

Negro—I must not dwell on this, but you know . . .

"And how about the main traits of your civilization? Compare them with those of the more advanced nations. Yours is a land of opportunity, and you have purposed well; but *distinguo*: What have you accomplished? Have you not given almost equal opportunity to evil and to good? For you the doctrine of equal rights too often means the right to do wrong. Consider the frequency among you of crimes of violence, your disregard for law, the failure of your city governments, the corruption of your upper classes. You have little to learn even from us of Russia as to the venerable usage of bribery. Consider, too, your waste of national and private resources, your backward agriculture, your unparalleled losses by fire, the tragedy of your mercantile life; why, your best authorities assure me that scarce one in twenty of your business men ever wins independence; at least ninety-five per cent of them fail, once or more than once, and die in debt or dependent. But again let us distinguish. Americans do not love the dollar any more than other men, nor do they chase it any more eagerly; and the world knows that they are among the most generous-minded and open-handed of people. Your real trouble, and it is a grave one, is that they have so little knowledge or care for anything but the dollar. Consider their ignorance of foreign peoples, languages, character, their small regard for scholarship; compare their intelligence, class by class, with that of the French, the Germans, the English. Among each of those peoples a score of illustrious names have come to the front during the Nineteenth Century; what is your record of intellectual achievement? I do not forget your pioneers and your leaders; you too have

## *Feodor Vladimir Larrovitch*

your roll of honor; and you have made good beginnings in science and art. But where is your great poet, painter, philosopher, builder of palaces or of symphonies? Has fate, or environment or the mixtures of your race, laid a ban upon their emergence? Look at other countries. England never produced a great composer, Switzerland never a great painter, Patagonia never a great poet; in their courses the stars have fought against them. The stars are still fighting against you. Yet nowhere is greater opportunity than with you. Tell your countrymen to cultivate leisure. It is only in America that wealth does not bring leisure. With leisure perhaps you may come to high attainment. But it will be a long time first. I am not a pessimist, nor yet an optimist; the words mean no more than that you have or have not quarreled with the world. I am a meliorist, and look for better things to come, especially in the art of human happiness; but that can only be through eugenics and the finer breeding of the human race. As to finer art and science—they also are matters of the far future."

But Larrovitch could not foresee that France was to send us the Impressionists, the Modernists, and the Cubists, and that the surges of Free Verse were to beat upon our shores. Not even in the crystal sphere was there any intimation that these boons were near at hand. He paused; his face was troubled. "This is old doctrine," he said; "but you are not too old to refuse it a hearing. Farewell; and think sometimes of your Russian friend." He spoke with great tenderness; and I thought of the inscription to Voltaire at Ferney: "All the world knew his intellectual greatness: the greatness of his heart the world did not know."

I never saw him again; nor do I think any one else in

## *Talks with Larrovitch*

this country can now remember his living person. In the long course of years it has been my fortune to know many gifted men; but among them all Feodor Vladimir Larrovitch remains for me the most engaging and impressive figure.

*Titus Munson Coan*



---

TOWARD A  
*Larrovitch*  
FOUNDATION

••• JAMES HOWARD BRIDGE

“BUT the investment pays six per cent!”

Peter Ivanovitch looked up at the banker and began to laugh. “Only six? I know of an investment that pays one hundred per cent.”

“No!”

“Yes, one hundred per cent.”

“Well, ah—do you think . . . ?”

“Certainly you can.”

“Yes?” Dotzin rubbed his hands gleefully.

“Education—the education of young men. There’s not a safer investment in the world nor one that pays a bigger rate of interest.”

*From “Dvornik.”*



THE receptivity of the American mind to new ideas was never so pronounced as at present. In these times of great national effort for the maintenance of a principle, something of the spiritual crops up through our superficialities and we quickly grasp the principles underlying our peculiar sociological phenomena. Never have these principles been so vividly described nor their causes so logically analyzed by any European writer, as by Feodor Vladimir Larrovitch.

In the various characters of his novels he portrayed a mingled soul-stuff which, although Russian as he introduced it into their words and actions, is comparable only to the mingled spiritual tides that give life to the great sea of the American genus.

Larrovitch's thesis was, in a word, simply this: that there is present in every creature—even the lowest—a spiritual element which is so vital and dynamic when aroused that its realism is the only one necessary for an author to present; that there is a realism of the spirit and a realism of the flesh, and the realism of the spirit is the only one that counts. Fleshly realism is a mere superficiality that can be laid aside at will, like an old coat.

In European countries recognition of this great Russian genius was tardy and only sporadic at best. Here adoption of his teachings was more general in the inner literary circles, yet few among us recognized the source of the inspiration. It charged the atmosphere with new thought, as with electric impulses proceeding from a wireless mechanism; but, like them, the point of origin was more or less unknown to us.

During this period Larrovitch's conceptions and theories were quietly appropriated by scriveners throughout the world, and many authors and teachers, both here and abroad, entered upon intellectual careers with

## *Feodor Vladimir Larrovitch*

capital borrowed from Larrovitch. For example, the fierce controversy that waged around the Russian Slavophilistic theories as a medium for Russian national development, was concerned not so much with the theory itself as with the proper assignment of the credit due its author. Other examples of efforts made to filch from Larrovitch the honors which were appropriately his—but which in his modesty he never valued—could be cited. There was his dialogue between Father Sergius and the schoolmaster in “Barin! Barin!” on the negative justification of realism, which was lifted bodily into the book of a Heidelberg professor. His chapter “Homo Sapiens” in “Dvornik” was only thinly disguised in Professor Schmeidler’s “Elementary Psychology,” published fifteen years after the appearance of that novel. And so with many other of Larrovitch’s contributions to the psychology of character scattered through his various books. All of which makes it necessary that some actual authority be established not only to safeguard Larrovitch’s honor, but to preserve intact and unperverted the system of knowledge he has left us.

To some it may seem well that the Larrovitch pantology now permeating the intellectual atmosphere and thrilling every point in it, should be left undisturbed in its all-pervasive activity. It may appear best, in lieu of some single focus of Larrovitchian teachings, some chair of Larrovitchian philosophy, that the tendency of the new thought to spread in ever widening circles be left unfettered by academic restrictions and free to extend itself by the momentum derived from its creator. If there were any assurance that the Larrovitch system would be preserved in its pristine purity under these conditions, there would be obvious advantages in a

## *Toward a Larrovitch Foundation*

multiplicity of what, in opposition to a "Larrovitch Chair," may be called "Larrovitch Footstools," dispersed in colleges throughout the land. But we have no such assurance. Already heretical offshoots and schismatic perversions of pantology are discoverable in some of our pseudo-scientific publications; and these, unless checked, will rapidly spread and become incorporated in the thought of the day.

For this and kindred reasons, it is eminently desirable that the intellectual treasures bequeathed to us be safeguarded by a duly accredited authority in whom devotion to Truth is equalled only by love of the master. Our priceless heritage of wisdom may thus be transmitted to unborn generations in all its original beauty, its purity and its strength. It can be, and must be kept free from the iconoclastic renovations to which we of this generation are too easily disposed. The Larrovitchian pantology is complete as it stands. It can, and must, remain so.

In a recent number of the virile and versatile *Popular Review* is a symposium by various eminent writers, in which the suggestion occurs and recurs that a Larrovitch chair be established in one of our great universities; a tentative offer of an endowment fund having been made to support such a chair. This is good; but it is not good enough. And for this reason: there has arisen in recent times a clamor for what is called "academic freedom." It is demanded that the occupant of a professorial position be free to interpret, according to his personal vagaries and idiosyncrasies, the tenets he has been appointed to transmit, untainted by prejudice or personal bias, to his scholars. This so-called "academic freedom" may not be encroached upon even by the trus-

## *Feodor Vladimir Larrovitch*

tees who originally made the appointment under a contract, mutually made and accepted, that the teaching given was to be only of the quality and kind agreed upon. To vest in any professor the right to misinterpret Larrovitch at will, and to hold this right for life—to pervert his doctrines, invert his arguments, jumble his facts—and this against the protests of all Larrovitchians, even against those of the very men who have contributed the fund supporting the heretical teacher, is an absurdity that no claim for "academic freedom" can disguise.

To avoid this and other dangers a counter-suggestion from the same symposium has been adopted by an influential group of Larrovitch's disciples. This is the establishment of the Larrovitch Foundation and Fellowship, with a controlling body of members selected from all parts of the country. These members are to meet at regular intervals, and gather at least once a year, probably on the master's birthday, at a commemorative banquet. The concensus of opinion of thousands of the followers of Larrovitch will thus govern the Fellowship and so regulate it as to preserve the orthodoxy of its teachings. An authoritative focus of Larrovitch's pantology will thus be created, while a world-wide propaganda is carried on, as now, by his disciples, the members of the Foundation. To bring America and Russia into deeper, closer sympathy will be their easy task. To inspire the spirit of Democracy among the people of every land, and in a real, personal and vital way, will be their mission. To raise in every heart a monument of gratitude to one of the greatest intellectual benefactors of mankind will be their joy.

Already the nucleus of a fund for the Larrovitch Foundation has been secured; and an effort is being

## *Toward a Larrovitch Foundation*

made to obtain for it the endowment fund recently offered to support a Larrovitch chair at a university. If this can be done—and it is made possible by the high regard in which the great leader is held by his generous patron—The Larrovitch Foundation will have a secure base. The enthusiastic devotion of his followers may be trusted to make the edifice constructed thereon a noble, worthy and perennial monument that shall immortalize the name of Larrovitch and reflect an honor on ourselves. With Horace we may truly say: *Dignum laude virum Musa vetat mori.*

*James Howard Bridge*



---

BIBLIOGRAPHY OF

*Larrovitch*

ARTHUR COLTON



C <sub>R</sub> ASNY Baba		[ <i>The Red Woman</i> ]
	Moscow, 1852	
Ivan Soronko	St. Petersburg, 1859	
Chorny Khleb		[ <i>Black Bread</i> ]
	St. Petersburg, 1860	
Propre et Ordonnée		[ <i>Swept and Garnished</i> ]
	Paris, 1864—St. Petersburg, 1865	
Vyvodne		[ <i>The Right to Marriage</i> ]
	St. Petersburg, 1866	
Barin! Barin!		[ <i>Master! Master!</i> ]
	St. Petersburg, 1870	
Dvornik		[ <i>The Door Keeper</i> ]
	St. Petersburg, 1879	
Gospodi Pomi		[ <i>Lord Have Mercy</i> ]
	St. Petersburg, 1881	



---

*Bibliographical Notes*

ARTHUR COLTON



**C**RASNY BABA [THE RED WOMAN] is a collection of peasant sketches that had appeared in a Siberian paper during Larrovitch's term of exile. It takes its name from *Baba* as the peasant woman is known. The word *crasny* has peculiar significance: red is the favorite color of the moujik. When he speaks of a thing being beautiful he speaks of it as red! This title shows how close to the peasant viewpoint Larrovitch came. The first edition of "Crasny Baba," issued from the press of C. Letupin of Moscow, in 1852, was a slim, small octavo volume of 96 pages, bound in yellow paper boards. There were no illustrations. The copy preserved in the Alexandroff Museum at Irkutsk lacks the lower half of page 24.

**IVAN SORONKO** is a novel of the Russian Robin Hood type. Published in St. Petersburg in 1859. First edition, copies of which are in libraries of the Universities of Kiev and Cracow, was an octavo of 398 pages. No illustrations.

**CHORNY KHLEB** [BLACK BREAD] is a collection of short stories about peasant life that appeared in various St. Petersburg journals after Larrovitch returned from Siberia. A. Betenkov of St. Petersburg was the publisher. The original volume issued in 1860, is an octavo in blue boards, 324 pages, with crude wood-cut head and tail pieces to each story. This ran into two editions and helped establish the literary reputation of the author.

**PROPRE ET ORDONNÉE** [SWEPT AND GARNISHED] a long short story issued while Larrovitch was in Paris in 1864, and reprinted in a Russian edition by Betenkov of St. Petersburg under the same title a year later. Copies of the French edition are fairly common. It was bound in yellow paper covers with a sketch of a Russian village street in black.

**VYVODNE** [THE RIGHT TO MARRIAGE] shows a complete change from Larrovitch's previous methods of writing and topics. It marks the beginning of his spiritual growth, and gave promise of the author's future success. It was bound in paper covers, 300 pages with no illustrations. The first edition is dated 1866. It ran into four editions and was eventually translated into Bulgarian, German and Danish. A pirated edition of

## *Feodor Vladimir Larrovitch*

a translation from the German is said to have appeared in Paris in 1868, but no copies are known to exist. A slim volume of three little songs which occurred in this novel were brought out in Paris by M. Eberlein. It is very rare.

**BARIN! BARIN** [MASTER! MASTER!] Another novel appeared from the press of Saphna-Novsky in St. Petersburg in 1870. It was the first of a trilogy. It was in red and yellow paper covers, a large volume of 350 pages, with a vignette on the title page. This ran into several editions, 50,000 copies being sold in one year alone. Translations appeared in Polish, Danish, German and French. A Yiddish translation is said to have been published, but no copies have been found; it was doubtless pirated.

**DVORNIK** [THE DOOR KEEPER] a novel, the second of the trilogy, in which the spiritual development of Larrovitch almost approached mysticism, was published by Betenkoff in St. Petersburg in 1874. Mr. Betenkoff had now become Larrovitch's publisher. It was an octavo volume of 400 pages with copper plate vignette on the title page and black buckram cover. A cheaper edition in paper covers was also issued. Copies of these two first editions are not common, but can occasionally be found. Seven editions in all were published and the book enjoyed French, German, Danish, Bulgarian and Italian translations.

**GOSPODI POMI** [LORD HAVE MERCY] was Larrovitch in the fullest flower of his spiritual development. In it the heights and depths of his religious belief are clearly shown. It was the final volume of the trilogy. It was published in St. Petersburg in 1881; large octavo, 440 pages, no illustrations, and yellow paper and brown buckram covers. Six editions were issued. Translations appeared in France, Germany, Denmark and Poland.

---

*References*

•§GUSTAVE SIMONSON



STUDENTS of Russian literature who desire to acquaint themselves further with the works of Larrovitch will find the following references of interest. The Authors Club is indebted to Dr. Gustave Simonson for compiling this list.

Life, Letters and Literary Labors of Larrovitch.—  
James Trotter. London, 1889.

Comentarios Sobre Novelas Rusas.—Eduardo Pasco.  
Barcelona, 1890.

Les Russes dans Paris.—M. Berton. Paris, 1871.

Le progrés de la philosophie.—C. G. Renard. Paris,  
1892.

Notes sur les Russes.—L. Henriquez. Paris, 1901.

Les nuits de la Crimée.—A. Thurot. Bordeaux, 1907.

Revue des productions littéraires du Caucasse.—J.  
T. Champollion. Paris, 1883.

Pourquoi les Russes souffrent-ils?—P. B. Sourain.  
Paris, 1897.

La Russie sous Alexandre II.—L. F. Robin. Paris,  
1900.

Les fondements de la Science Slave.—C. A. Bruhl-  
Levy. Paris, 1913.

Larrovitch.—V. Mazkenov. Paris, 1899.\*

Les Amours de T. Vladimir Larrovitch.—Ivan Bar-  
tinski. Bris, 1893.†

L'Histoire Gallante de Teodor Vladimir Larrovitch.  
—Marcel Lanatiére. Paris, 1900.

Die wahren Freunde der Slawen.—A. Aretz. Munich,  
1896.

\*A French translation—an excellent piece of work, incidentally—of the 1890 Russian edition published in St. Petersburg.

†The original Russian edition of this was published in 1893 in Moscow.

## *Feodor Vladimir Larrovitch*

Dostoievsky und seine Zeitgenossen.—V. M. Zeudorf.  
Berlin, 1900.

Die Entwickelung der realistischen Novelle Russlands.—G. Bruncher. Berlin, 1913.

Kiew und seine Söhne.—L. W. Lewezer. Leipsic, 1882.

Sibirien und was wir ihn verdanken.—B. Plumacher.  
Heidelberg, 1886.

**ТРУДЫ ЛАВРОВИЧА.** — Петроградъ, 1914

**ЛАВРОВИЧЪ И ЕГО ЛЮБОВНЫЯ ПОХОЖДЕНИЯ.** С. БАРИНОВЪ. — Петроградъ, 1896

**СРЕДНИЕ ГОДЫ ЛАВРОВИЧЪ.** Г. К. ВЛАДИМИРСКИЙ-КОФЪ. — Москва, 1887

**СЫНЫ КРЫМА.** В. САНИНЪ.

**МАСТЕРЪ НОВЕЛИСТЬ РОССИИ** В. КНАБРУНИНЪ. — Киевъ, 1890

**ЛИТЕРАТУРА СИБИРИ.** Г. ВЕЗАВИНЪ. — Петроградъ, 1912

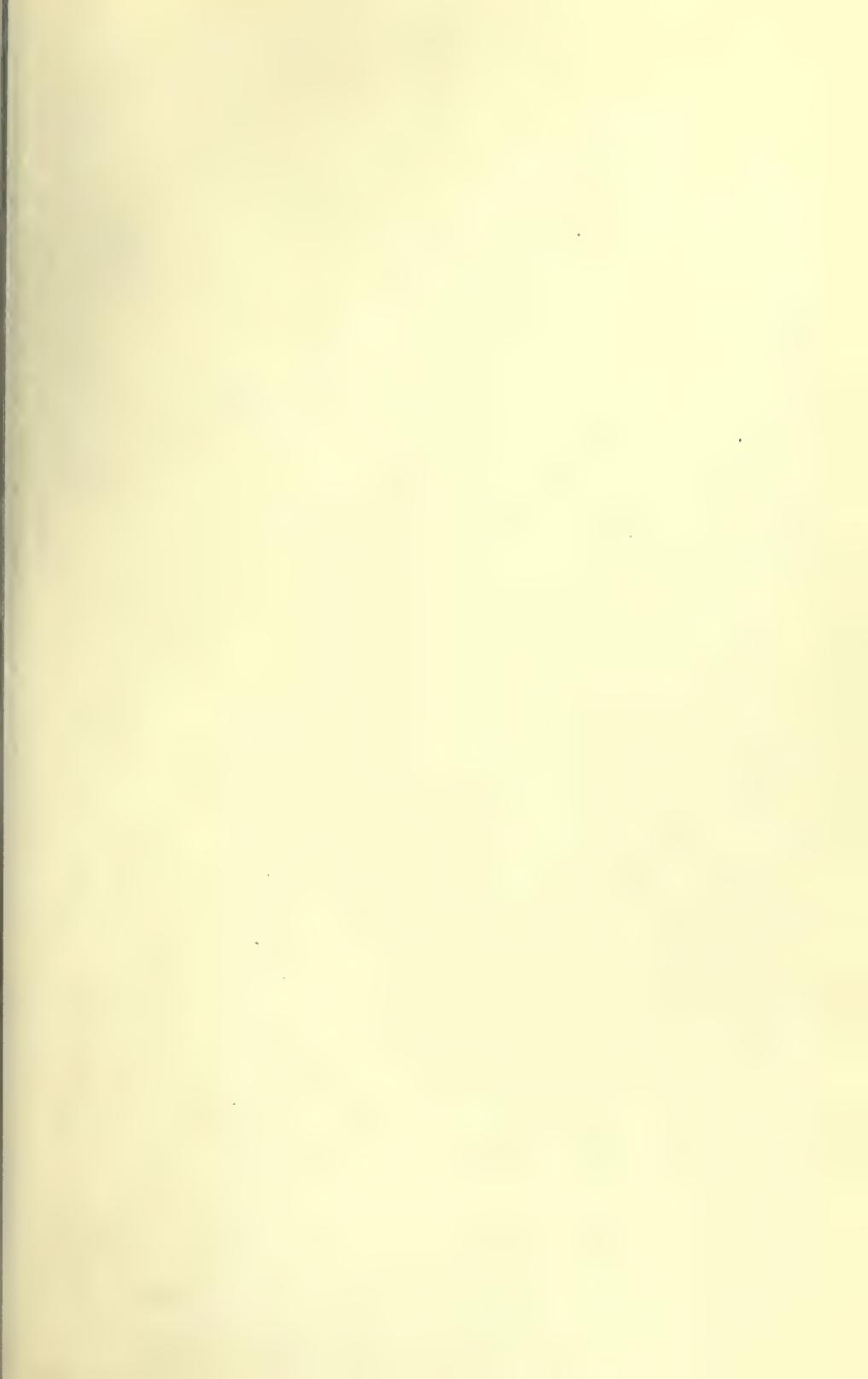
**ДУШЕВНЫЙ ОБЛИКЪ ЛАВРОВИЧА.** С. НАДРОЖЪ. — Москва.

**ВЕЛИКІЙ ПУТЬ КЪ ВОСТОКУ.** А. РЕТСОВЪ. Петроград. 1905

**ЛАВРОВИЧЪ И ДОСТОЕВСКІЙ.** С. РЕНЯТИНЪ. — Петроградъ, 1913

THIS BOOK WAS DESIGNED BY WILLIAM  
ASPINWALL BRADLEY FOR THE YALE UNI-  
VERSITY PRESS, AND EXECUTED UNDER HIS  
SUPERVISION BY NORMAN T. A. MUNDER  
AND COMPANY, BALTIMORE















PN  
171  
F7J6

Jordan, William George  
Feodor Vladimir  
Larrovitch

PLEASE DO NOT REMOVE  
CARDS OR SLIPS FROM THIS POCKET

---

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO LIBRARY

---

